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LILITH is named for the legendary predecessor of Eve who insisted on equality with Adam: ***"After the Holy One created the first human being, Adam, the Holy One created a woman, also from the earth, and called her 'Lilith.' Lilith said: "We are equal because we both come from the earth . . .'"*** **(From *The Alphabet of Ben Sira, 23a-b*)**

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FROM THE EDITOR

My editorial space is smaller than usual in this issue because of the remarkable number of tax-deductible contributions LILITH received this season. Many were from new donors, and every subscriber contributing over $50 could designate a person in whose honor the gift was being given. (We sent cards to each honoree.)

About honoring: when I interviewed women for the article on Jewish women's philanthropy in this issue, many told me that they don't want to be honored themselves—for any cause—but they enjoy making contributions to honor a friend.

I remember the first time this happened to me. On my tenth birthday I had my formal introduction to philanthropy (aside from the ubiquitous blue box from the Jewish National Fund), from the mother of my buddy Myra.

I'd invited the usual bevy of friends to my birthday party. Lunch around the dining room table, with little fluted cups of nuts and candies at each place—very traditional stuff. And very traditional gifts. But the one gift I remember to this day came from a friend whose mother was a no-nonsense, non-fluted-cup type of woman. (Since women and girls learn from one another all the time, you never know when you're in danger of being a role model.) Myra brought me a square white envelope.

Her mother, a friend of my mom's, was unusual even among the extraordinary women of her circle. These women, who had known each other since childhood, were smart, well-read, and cared about (and knew about) books, music, theater, art. For thirty-five years they met each Monday afternoon to study together—Bible, then Shakespeare, all of James Joyce; later, Virginia Woolf and Anais Nin.

Myra's mother was the group's leader. She was unconventional in many ways, said her friends. Scholarly, she was writing a PhD. thesis when I was growing up. She must have been very busy—studying, teaching, raising three daughters, wife of a hardworking local doc—so it would have been incongruous imagining her going into a record store or a toy store to pick out an ordinary birthday gift for her daughter to bring me.

Myra handed me the envelope rather sheepishly. I opened my presents at the table, after lunch and before the movie. I forget which Cherry Ames books I was given that year (I admired the spunkiness and didn't notice the sexism until later), but I have never forgotten that inside the envelope was a blue-and-white card announcing that a contribution had been made in my honor to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The date was March 1954, and I still remember exactly what the card looked like, and how mysteriously connected I felt to the institution it came from.

She may have been motivated by mere expediency, but my friend's mom's message was clear and powerful: I was a person worthy of being honored, and philanthropy was something very special.

Susan Weidman Schneider

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LETTERS

Keep running ads for Good Vibrations! It's a good-humored, woman-positive enterprise, and an important resource for women who want to explore (and enjoy!) their sexuality without braving sleaze stores.

Splitting our bodies from our spirits cripples both. Shalom,

SUSAN ROTHBAUM
Minneapolis, MN

I have enjoyed my subscription to LILITH for four years (it was a gift to myself when I graduated from medical school) Why do I value LILITH so much? For the intellectual stimulation, for information I do not receive from any other source, for contemporary women's literature, and especially for inspiration. In today's social climate, we desperately need more awareness of women as role models—strong biblical women (after all, the magazine is named for Lilith, not Eve), women immigrants, women during the Holocaust, and women in all walks of life who are blazing trails previously closed to us.

This is precisely why LILITH *must* continue to print this and similar ads. Women who enjoy vibrators and other sex toys have broken away from the idea that the only "correct" sex is with men who are somehow supposed to know what we want, and hopefully, will give it to us. We must affirm our right to enjoy our sexuality, either alone or with a partner. We are, after all, responsible for and entitled to our own pleasure.

As an AIDS educator, I was happy to see the term "safe sex" in the ad. In this era of AIDS, the only true safe sex is solo sex. Because of the questions about a partner's drug and sexual history and the unreliability of condoms, I use the term "safer sex" when discussing sex with a partner.

An active, joyous sex life is not incompatible with intellect and spirituality. Let's continue to advertise Good Vibrations in LILITH!

CINNDI DAVIDSON, D.O.
Wells, ME

As a radical feminist in the early 70's, I became totally involved in the women's liberation movement. Working with other passionately political women in the NYC chapter of NOW, I was very active in many political actions to achieve equality for women.

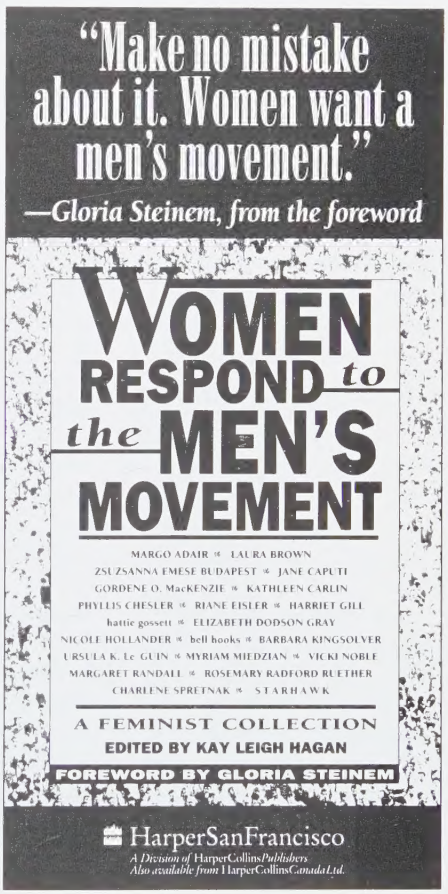
In 1972 the chapter sponsored a Women's Sexuality Conference and I was appointed coordinator. It was the first time in history that women were getting together to talk openly about sex and their own sexual lives. Highly successful, it was attended by over 1500 women. It was at this time that I became totally conscious of the fact that the way the patriarchy had succeeded in enslaving women was by denying us control over our own bodies and our own sexuality. I decided to embark on a business venture that I felt would empower women to reclaim their sexuality and reclaim their power. And so, my sex boutique, Eve's Garden, was created in 1974. When I am often asked, "How come a nice Jewish girl like you started a sex business?", I say, "to empower women to reclaim their self-esteem and sexual power, to change the world."

I recall that Eve's Garden ran a small ad in LILITH in the early years of its publication and was totally accepted. That is why I am so saddened to learn that several readers have expressed regret that LILITH has accepted an ad from another woman-owned erotica business. Somehow it feels to me (and I'm now 70 years old) as if the clock is turning back.

And yet, even as I write this I see a paradox, and that is that if my consciousness had not been raised twenty years ago, I, too, might have written a similar letter under the same circumstances. My Jewish upbringing left me with an enormous feeling of shame about my body and tremendous guilt about having sex. So, it would be very normal to feel that any manifestation of sex, either in a visual or written image or in an ad for a vibrator, would become something "inappropriate for LILITH" or "in poor taste." Had it not been for the women's movement, I might have said that too.

It's time, finally, to start taking a sex-positive stand in a sex-negative culture, to be proud to be sexual women, to begin to view our sexuality as a thing of beauty, honor, integrity and sacredness. Time to

(continued on page 30)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—Gloria Steinem, from the foreword
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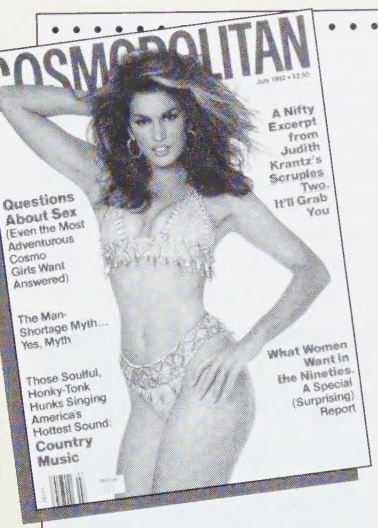
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"For I conclude that the enemy is not lipstick but guilt itself: that we deserve lipstick, if we want it, and *free speech; we deserve to be sexual and serious — or whatever we please; we are entitled to wear cowboy boots to our own revolution."*

— Naomi Wolf, The Beauty Myth

Naomi Wolf, Cindy Crawford, and Camille Paglia?

Princeton University recently held its third annual Women's Bodies Festival, entitled "Raising Women's Voices: Perspectives on Women and the Media." Being an alumna and a feminist, and having heard that Camille Paglia would be sharing a stage with supermodel Cindy Crawford on the same day that Naomi Wolf, author of *The Beauty Myth*, was speaking, I decided to attend.

Naomi Wolf spoke to an ardently receptive audience. Her popular thesis is that society and the media keep the newly empowered American woman at bay by brandishing unrealistic images of female beauty. If, she says, we are kept busy enough agonizing over our faces and bodies in an effort to conform to the images in *Vogue*, which actually are computer-doctored pictures of half-starved women, we will never find the autonomy, or the self-confidence, to "march on congress" again — or even to lift our heads and notice external injustices.

A far more contentious audience faced the panel on "The Power of Beauty: The Beauty of Power." Its speakers were Alisa Bellettini, *tres* mod Senior Producer of MTV's "House of Style"; Linda Wells, 40-ish but eerily 20-ish-looking editor-in-chief of Allure Magazine, the self-proclaimed "beauty magazine for women with IQ in the triple figures"; Camille Paglia, very angry founder-spokesperson of an alternative feminism that extols the sexual power of women and lambasts academic Women's Studies; and Cindy Crawford, supermodel.

In direct (and vehement) opposition to Naomi Wolf, Ms. Paglia spoke of the power of aesthetic representations of women throughout the history of art and culture, calling our media images just a continuance of the age-old glorification of the beauty of the female form. Cindy Crawford emphasized the power she herself draws from her capitalistic manipulations of her own beauty. When women in the audience spoke out, saying that the image she wields with such power makes many women feel pathologically inadequate, leading to crises like anorexia and bulemia, she replied simply, "So what should I do, gain weight?" Ms. Crawford took care to point out that she is in the business of business, not making women feel miserable — and that the bottom line is that *women continue to buy the magazines touting her image.* Linda Wells said that if her magazine would sell (itself and its advertisers' products) with pictures of real-looking women, she would stop using models — but that of course it wouldn't.

Wells and Crawford performed a neat trick when they laid the blame for media images of female beauty on what Wolf calls "the victims' quarter." They were, however, pointing out one place of women's power: our checkbooks. Cindy Crawford turned our attention to the fact that her power does not derive from her beauty; it derives from her *ability to make money with her beauty.* That ability depends upon us: the consumer. It is our gift to her, and to the media establishment she represents, until we choose to stop giving it.

— Rebecca Lubarr

Women Rabbis, 1993

IN ISRAEL . . .

In July 1992, Na'ama Kelman became the first woman rabbi ordained in Israel. Rabbi Kelman was ordained by the Reform Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Jerusalem, twenty years after HUC-JIR in Cincinnati ordained Sally Priesand, the first woman rabbi. U.S.-born Kelman was raised in the American Conservative movement, (where her father, the late Rabbi Wolfe Kelman was Executive Vice-President of its Rabbincal Assembly for nearly 40 years), but came to the Reform movement because in Israel the Conservative movement refused to ordain women as rabbis. Says Rabbi Kelman,"Women's spiritual leadership is a blessing, not a threat. We continue to be blessed by twenty years that have brought forth hundreds of women who have enriched rabbinic leadership and leadership in the Jewish community worldwide."

IN EUROPE . . .

France has just one woman rabbi—Pauline Bebe. Rabbi

The Wholesale Kelzmer Band was invited to perform at the Presidential Inagural after sending Clinton their press kit.

Bebe studied for the rabbinate in England, because in France woman are not yet allowed to be ordained. The Chief Rabbi of France, unwilling to accept Bebe's status as a rabbi, has refused to meet with her.

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AND IN NEW YORK CITY . . .

"May you be inscribed in the Book of Death," the voice hollered into the synagogue answering machine, just days before Yom Kippur. Although the daily threatening phone calls to a rabbi at one of New York City's largest congregations may sound like an anti-Semitic headline, many of these calls are in fact, made by Jews. In September, Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum was installed as the first rabbi of Congregation Beit Simchat Torah, the Gay and Lesbian Synagogue of New York City. Congregation Beit Simchat Torah is the second oldest lesbian and gay synagogue and the largest in the world with over 1200 members.

The congregation, hit hard by AIDS, boasts a diverse membership, where religious affiliations range from Orthodox to secular humanist.

Rabbi Kleinbaum has received a tremendous amount of public attention — both positive and negative. Press headlines include: "Manhattan's First Lesbian Rabbi," "The Lavender Pulpit" and "*Ha lesbit ha-aleza ha-rishona* (the first lesbian rabbi)." She has appeared in publications as diverse as the *New York Times*, the Israeli *Ha-Aretz* and the gay/lesbian magazine *NYQ*.

— Hadar Dubowsky

(continued on page 32)

In Israel, Ethiopian Women's Traditional Crafts Meet Modern Marketing

Recently, well-known fiber artist, Shirley Waxman of Potomac, Maryland, spent three intense weeks with 100 Ethiopian women who live in absorption-center mobile homes adjacent to Moshav Sde Mitzan in Israel's Negev. Her mission was to teach the women how to incorporate their traditional embroidery skills into marketable items, while at the same time providing them with much-needed work, distraction, and self-esteem. The women's traditions forbid them to leave home for training or employment, and they depend upon small Jewish Agency stipends for their livelihood.

Waxman drew on a variety of resources to prepare for the trip. She consulted with folklorists in the Washington area, studied the embroidery on dresses brought to the States by friends who had visited Ethiopia, and convinced a West Virginia company to donate hundreds of dollars worth of thread. Waxman boarded the plane for Israel "loaded down with hundreds of spools of thread, snippers, and scissors for everyone—everything I would need to start the project."

Once in Israel, Waxman, working with a translator, transformed the makeshift social hall, composed of two trailers, into a working area. She decided that embroidered *kippot* [skullcaps] and *challah* covers would sell well, but because both are foreign to the Ethiopian community, she had to oversee their production. On raw silk imported from China, Waxman cut out *kippot*, readying them for embroidery. She traced parallel lines on *challah* covers, preparing the borders for the geometric designs. In their own homes the women would embroider freehand, but Waxman wanted to make sure that the crafts would be perfectly symmetrical, knowing that symmetry (for better or worse) enhances marketability. In the center of each *challah* cover she traced the Hebrew letters for the word "Shabbat," with the Amharic equivalent just above the Hebrew. As the women start learning Hebrew, they will be able to trace the letters themselves. Once the tracing is done, the women embroider whatever designs they wish.

At work, at absorbtion center.

It is in this respect that the project differs, perhaps, from other models of American aid abroad—Waxman is determined that the work reflect the women's native skills. "I had no intention of imposing any sense of design from our culture onto their work," she says.

Remaining true to traditional Ethiopian motifs and colors, the women produce piece after piece of brilliantly colored embroidery—vivid orange, yellow, black, purple, green, and blue. A basic chain stitch forms the abstract geometric designs.

Waxman did the finishing work on the items, edging the *kippot* in silk and lining them and the *challah* covers in cotton. (The silk sets up a static electricity, she explains, keeping the *kippah* firmly on the head.) As the Ethiopian women learn to use sewing machines, they will begin to finish their own pieces. For now, some items are finished elsewhere in Israel and some in America.

The Ethiopian women were exhilarated by their own work. "Others have had similar ideas," says Arlene Kushner, of the American Association for Ethiopian Jewry, original sponsor of the project, "but Waxman is the first one to respect the women's indigenous skills, patterns, and sense of color. Consequently, the project has generated for the women a sense of pride every bit as important as the money."

The women are paid by the piece, and earnings are, for now, being reinvested in the project. Profits will be used to introduce new crafts, such as weaving and pottery. The project is currently being sponsored by the Washington Council of Na'amat; hopefully Na'amat Israel will soon become involved.

Kippot *range in price from $35 to $95.* Challah *covers and* atarot *[neckbands on prayer shawls] are $100. For information on ordering call (301) 585-4815 or write to Ethiopian Handcrafts, PO Box 454, Rockville, MD 20850-9998.*

—Helen Mintz Belitsky

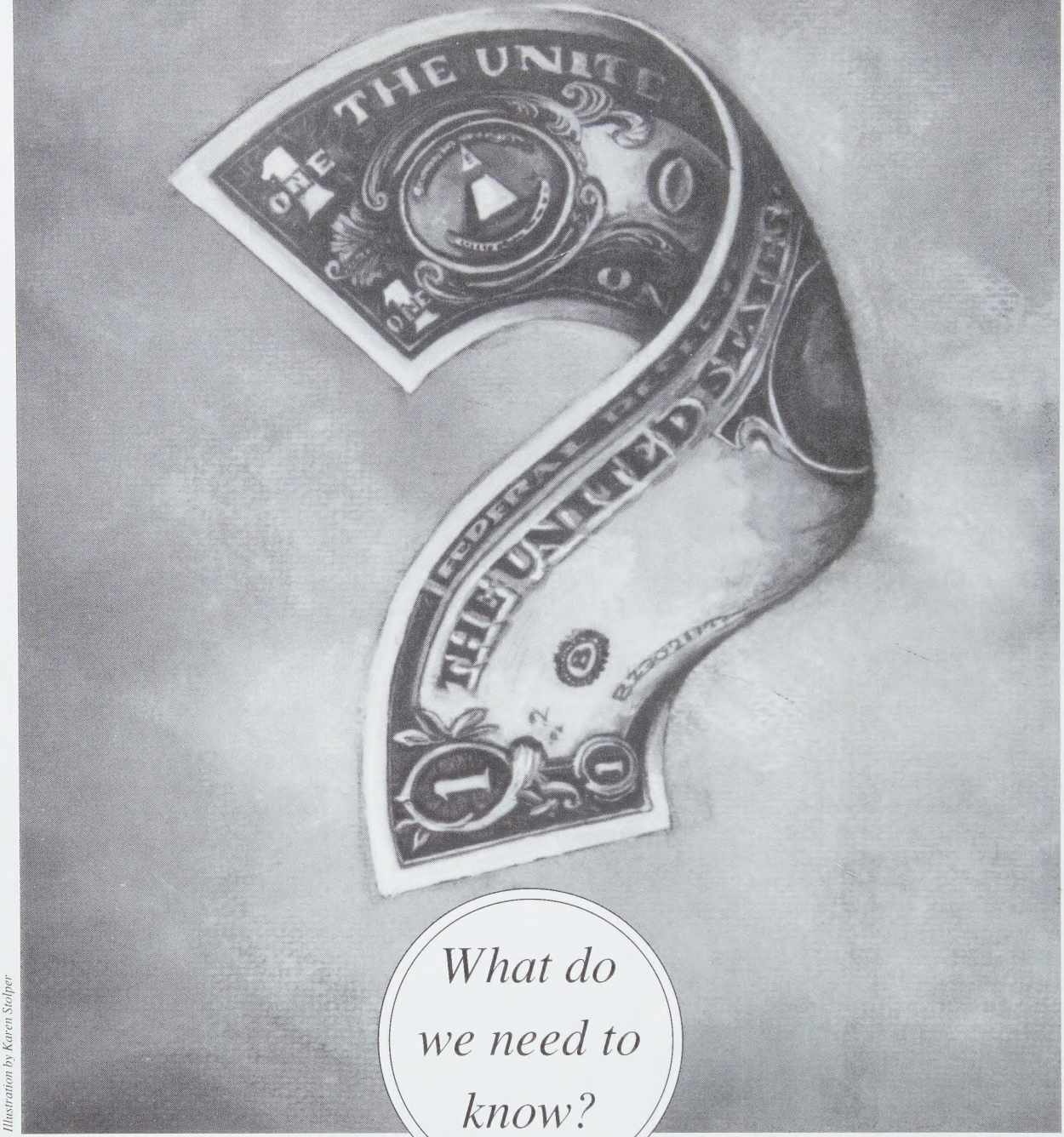


Illustration by Karen Stolper

JEWISH WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY

by Susan Weidman Schneider

PART ONE: Women's giving to "mainstream" Jewish organizations

Jewish women today control more wealth than ever before—as wage-earners, beneficiaries of estates, directors of companies, board members of foundations and women's funds, and as the ones in charge of running family foundations while their brothers, fathers or husbands manage the family businesses. Despite their potential to use this money for Jewish causes, Jewish women are giving a smaller percentage of their *tzedakah* [charity] to Jewish organizations than ever before. While secular organizations are examining women's patterns of philanthropy and exploring ways of bringing women in (including Jewish women) as major donors, many Jewish organizations still aren't paying enough attention to women's new "charity clout."

As the generation of extremely wealthy men who are the mainstays of Jewish philanthropy ages and dies, and the burden of sustaining Jewish institutions becomes shared by a broader base of donors, women's contributions become an urgent matter. Obviously, Jewish women's philanthropy has implications for the entire Jewish community, but aside from one or two researchers, the topic has not yet been examined closely, either by the general Jewish organizations (which seldom segment their statistics by gender) or by Jewish women's organizations. Both groups remain largely ignorant of this huge new repository of expertise and insight on women's philanthropy—which has been generated by researchers in the women's movement, political campaigns, university alumnae giving (an important sector, given Jewish women's high educational levels) and academia [See box].

In this first segment of a two-part LILITH series, I will explore the following questions: How do the causes Jewish women give to differ from those of other women? The traditional Jewish fundraising method—peer-pressure—has in the past worked well for men, but does it boomerang for Jewish women? How can Jewish women make sure that their philanthropy most effectively leverages change? The second part of the series (in LILITH's Summer issue), will focus on women who support primarily "alternative" Jewish causes, and progressive and feminist organizations.

In its 1992 analysis of "Trends in American Jewish Philanthropy," the United Jewish Appeal (the most successful philanthropy in the entire United States, raising more than $668 million in 1991) devotes not one of its 130 pages (and 29 tables) to women. (Jews are not alone in this omission—Independent Sector, one of the major organizations which studies volunteer groups, has just completed a survey of "Religious Congregations in the United States" without breaking down any of its information by gender.

Against this egregious background of neglect, LILITH decided to interview more than 100 women donors to Jewish causes, as well as professional fundraisers, money managers and psychologists. We found that Jewish women were unquestionably a distinct group. We hope that our research—broad though not formally statistical—will encourage social scientists to take the next step.

Because United Jewish Appeal (UJA) and local Jewish federations ("umbrella" campaigns for a whole array of services in the United States and Israel) raise vastly more money than any individual Jewish group, it made sense to focus here on some characteristics of women's giving in relation to these major organizations.

The Male Model

Needless to say, everything we know about gender differences is borne out in an analysis of charitable giving.

• Men often characterize their giving to Jewish causes as a "Jewish tax," suggesting a depersonalized, obligatory, routine tithing. "Business-as-usual" was the way one woman described the philanthropy of Jewish men. Others said: "Men fund the status quo, women fund change. Men give to preserve institutions, women give to create new programs."

• When dealing with money, men are motivated as much by competitive instincts as by any cause itself. "For men, money means power and ego," says Deborah Fuller Hahn, a journalist and community activist in Fort Lauderdale. She notes that "the difference is unbelievable. I've gone to mostly male fundraising events, where people stand up and announce how much they're going to give to the UJA/Federation fundraising appeal. One man will get up and say. 'I'm giving $18,000.' The next man gets up and announces: "My partner here is giving $18,000? OK. I'm going to give $18,100. Women's giving is much more personalized—they give because something in the community has touched them."

Emily Sunstein of Philadelphia, a board member of the American Jewish Committee and the Philadelphia Free Library Association, grew up in Texas, where "my mother often accused my father of making donations just because he wanted the prestige. Her donations were different." Classically, when men give to a philanthropy, they achieve status in a hierarchy or pecking order, display their success, compete with others, and gain influence in their communities. In the mid-1920's Eleanor Roosevelt described government service in terms that apply equally well to philanthropy "Women go into politics to make social change; men go into politics to get elected."

Maddie Glazer of Des Moines, who supports Jewish causes and is national chair of a $105 million campaign for Drake University says, "I don't like to give to bricks and mortar. I don't need to see my name on something. I like to give where I feel the money can do the most good." This attitude is shared by most women. According to Harvard sociologist Francie Ostrower who has just conducted a study of "elite" philanthropists in New York City, most of these men give to established institutions, while "only the women give to social services and programs. No men do."

• The way in which men ask for money is different, too—and it antagonizes most women (and some men). Karen Stone, a development officer at UCLA, calls men's style of asking for money,"command and control: 'Give because I tell you to.'" Many men feel flattered by this approach. "The assumption in this command is that of course we *have* lots of money," explains one generous anonymous male donor, "we just need to fork it over."

• Nicki Newman Tanner, active with UJA/Federation in New York and a Board member of the 92nd Street YM/YWHA in Manhattan, has just co-chaired the most successful college fundraising campaign in U.S. history—more than $168 million given to Wellesley by alumnae. She chides Jewish federations for "never letting the donor feel good about the gift. You're immediately told that there are more needs to be met, that next year you'll be expected to give more. You're even told that your contribution this year isn't 'significant'. Women don't respond to this." Even the top leadership of the federation Women's Division reflects this dissatisfaction with how women are asked to give money: 94% said that they would give more to the Federation "if they were solicited differently," according to a 1986 study.

These examples point to the fact that male and female giving are indeed different. "Donors will give to a person, not a cause" is the male-oriented wisdom parroted in "solicitor training" sessions by men trying to figure out how to extract money from other men. This axiom doesn't hold for women, however. We know that women DO give to support a cause they believe in—not to compete, not to impress the solicitor, not to see their names on buildings. It's no wonder, then, that men trying to raise money say "women of independent means are very difficult to solicit." These men are on the wrong track.

What should Jewish organizations know about women's giving?

Charitable giving has been one of the few socially sanctioned public activities for middle- and upper-class women. In the transition from time to dollars, women's giving moves in the opposite direction from men's. First a woman volunteers, or is drawn to the cause; then she writes the check.

Women want a connection to the work they support, so it stands to reason that they reach for their checkbooks for causes that really touch them. Here's a case in point: Rabbi Sue Levi Elwell tells about a group of Reform women rabbis who were approached to fund a faculty slot at Hebrew Union College, the movement's rabbinical seminary. They replied that as women they are paid less than their male colleagues, that many of them are not working in congregations and hence have no discretionary funds, and so on. Yet when one of the women then asked, "What if this were specifically a chair in feminist theology?" the women immediately agreed that for *this* idea they would stretch their *tzedakah* resources. Women's philanthropy is often determined by how intimately and specifically a donor can

connect to a cause.

Consonant with this, women also, according to fundraisers, ask "a million more questions" than men do. "If I am approached to contribute to an athletic facility in Israel," says Paula Gottesman, who generously funds both Jewish and non-Jewish community projects, "I want to know: Will women have equal access to the gym? Will there be facilities for the handicapped? And child-care facilities so overburdened mothers can use it too? And is a gym really necessary in that neighborhood, or is job training more urgent?" This parallels what happens when women buy stocks; one (male) broker grumbles, "When I give a woman client a piece of paper she hangs on to it for a week. A man would make up his mind right away."

A woman's concern for detail can be a great strength in philanthropy. "Women are more rational than men on boards," says Judith Stern Peck, former chair of the Task Force on Jewish Women at the Commission on Synagogue Relations of New York UJA/Federation and a board member of MAZON: a Jewish Response to Hunger. "Women hold organizations more accountable," she says "We are so used to looking after details that we're more accurate about our fiduciary and fiscal responsibilities. For example, I sit on one board where the few women boards members wouldn't let the organization expand without sufficient budget. Men's minds turn to mush when they walk into a board room—they wouldn't run their business this way."

"Men are very sloppy about knowing the details of the projects they support." confirms Raquel Newman of San Francisco, active with scores of Jewish organizations in the US and Israel, and a consultant to nonprofit organizations.

Beatrice Cummings Mayer of Chicago, immediate past president of the Nathan Cummings Foundation, believes that "a female response to needs is very directed; we will bring this to philanthropy. NPO's," she says, using the in-the-loop acronym for nonprofit organizations, "are not sensitive enough to emerging needs and new approaches to old problems—such as homelessness, mental health issues, children at risk."

Women seek a "culture of comfort" with one another

Women share a commonality of experience that creates a strong baseline for a fundraising solicitation by another woman. In face-to-face solicitations, men stress that "who asks" is important, in order to establish a connection (however formal and codified) between the asker and the donor. But women don't require this prior connection to recognize their commonality—it happens instantly. In one flash, in a shared laugh over a politician's gaffe reported in the morning newspaper, or a sigh of understanding over child-rearing difficulties,women acknowledge their common experiences. The literature we have in common bonds us too, even if we haven't all read Deborah Tannen or Carol Gilligan cover to cover. Many women report that they meet strangers and can talk in a kind of feminist shorthand very quickly (even if the F word is never mentioned).

> *"Men's minds turn to mush when they walk into a boardroom."*
>
> —*Judith Stern Peck*

Jewish women have something to teach others on this subject—the model of women working comfortably with other women that is characteristic of Jewish women's organizations, synagogue sisterhoods and women's divisions of Jewish federations. Other organizations are beginning to understand that many women feel more comfortable working with other women on money issues. Co-ed colleges and universities such as Cornell and the University of Pennsylvania are now starting women's councils.Natalie Pelavin, a seasoned Jewish community leader, activist and political fundraiser in Michigan, notes that this is "so different from 15 years ago, when women wanted only to be part of men's groups."

After witnessing a women's "caucus"—the term used by United Jewish Appeal for its group fundraising sessions—a male observer comments: "I can't believe it. The women talked very personally about crises in their own lives and why they want to support Jewish programs. Some of them even cried."

Joyce Antler, Professor of American Studies and Women's Studies at Brandeis observed what she calls "Jewish women making ritual" in a group solicitation of funds in Boston. Women passed a candle around the room as each woman introduced herself, spoke about her ties to the Jewish community and how much she was going to contribute this year. "You could see that the bonding had meaning both in terms of the Jewishness and the femaleness."

The remarkable successes of women's political fundraising in the 1992 campaign reinforce this perception of women's commonality. For example, Natalie Pelavin says that "All you had to do in the fall of '92 was to say politics, women and choice in the same breath and women simply threw money at you. I've never seen anything like it." The politics of those stellar political campaigns proves both that women give out of a deep sense of commonality with other women and to support causes they believe in.

Some American Jewish organizations—for example, American Jewish Congress—phased out their women's divisions in the 1970's, only to discover by the mid-80's that women wanted to act together. They then created the Commission on Women's Equality. The difference lies in the feminist nature of the new women's group—it addresses women's issues, not just the agenda of the parent organization as a whole. Similarly, ten years ago there was discussion about abolishing B'nai B'rith Women or merging it into its male counterpart. Now it has completely separated from B'nai B'rith International and is a powerful women's organization unto itself. Some women, however, worry that separate women's organization will "warehouse" women, keeping their issues far from the center of money and power.

Does this "culture of comfort" indeed ghettoize women? Certainly less so than in the past. Now there is a critical mass of women qualified to speak out with authority to a male world. Women are empowered and encouraged to act by being with other women. The question remains to be answered, however, if Jewish women, acting in concert, will be able to make significant changes in the organizations they support.

What gives us clues about Jewish women's philanthropic behavior?

American Jewish women are the best educated in the country by a long shot (64% of Jewish women between 25 and 45 have college degrees, as compared to 18% of other white American women), and as such have been uniquely positioned to take advantage of the opportunities that have opened up to all women in the professions and business life in the past decade. Rikki Abzug of Yale University says she senses that the Jewish women who serve on boards of trustees of nonprofit organizations are there "for their own ties and talents, not because they're somebody's wife or daughter."

• "Giving is a Jewish habit" asserts Sylvia Barack Fishman of Brandeis University. The Talmud tells, very practically, that "*eem ayn kemach, ayn Torah* [where there is no flour there is no learning]." In other words, you need bread too. In focus groups with women

donors of all faiths. UCLA Director of Donor and Prospect Relations Dyan Sublett noticed that "the Jewish women were the ones who said that religious ideals and family traditions had shaped their own philanthropy."

Tzedakah, the Hebrew word for charity, literally means "doing justly," a religious obligation. In Jewish life, philanthropic activity is sometimes a substitute for religious affiliation. One woman, the daughter of wealthy, highly assimilated German Jews, says of her Christmas-tree childhood,"I knew I was Jewish only because my mother gave money to Jewish organizations." But unlike the record of non-Jewish women's charity, which has largely been church-related (according to studies of Catholic women and of largely non-Jewish women in Indianapolis), Jewish women's "religious" charity has been largely directed through Jewish women's organizations. Direct giving to synagogues has been men's work—perhaps because the capital campaigns synagogues need to run are so edifice-oriented. Women's contributions to synagogues have largely been in the area of education--underwriting, for example, an adult education series, an annual scholar-in-residence program or a special lecture.

• Because women were traditionally closed out of much of public religious life, community involvement through philanthropy became an alternative route to participation and empowerment in the Jewish community. Jewish women's organizations have been in the past the *shul* for women. Philanthropy was not only a road to participation and (relative) power in the Jewish community, but also one of the few sanctioned ways of expressing publicly the religious or spiritual impulse.

• Many Jewish women choose to express their Jewish identity through philanthropy when their marriage to a non-Jew might make synagogue attendance uncomfortable. About 30% of Jewish women under the age of 40 who are marrying for the first time will marry a man not born Jewish. "More than a quarter of the women in my Jewish women's group in UJA/Federation are married to non-Jews, and are groping for a way to affiliate as Jews," says Linda Kern, of Knoxville, Tennessee. Philanthropy for Jewish causes is a useful and important measure of how much their religious identity still means to women who participate only minimally in other Jewish activities.

• Recognizing women's philanthropic impulses and financial resources, some fundraisers view women's issues as an opportunity to attract money. Two recent examples:

The Jewish Theological Seminary decided in the fall of 1992 that its Rosh Hashanah message—delivered in a full-page ad in *The New York Times* and elsewhere and used as handouts in most Conservative congregations—would deal with domestic violence in Jewish families [see Kol Ishah, p. 32]. Whether raising money was a prime motive for the ad is unclear; what we do know is that women around the country did make charitable contributions to the JTS after the ad appeared. Rachel Josefowitz Siegel of Ithaca, New York, said "I wasn't going to make a contribution to the Seminary this year, but when I saw that ad I had to." Just as a so-called women's issue attracted this donor, another organization, the Simon Wiesenthal center in Los Angeles, lost her, because in its numerous mailings she saw "no pictures of women active or giving, no quotations from women—no awareness that women exist! Just the occasional picture of women as wives."

• Brenda Lipitz of Baltimore, as president of its Women's Division, was outraged by recent data showing that executive directors (the paid heads) of women's divisions of Jewish federations were not considered part of each federation's top management team. "How can we imagine women are being taken seriously in the Jewish community when we see an organizational chart like this?" Spurred by her advocacy, the Baltimore federation has restructured its staff; the women's division professional is now part of the executive team, and support staff has been added to the

women's program. But Lipitz's success has not yet been duplicated in many cities, and her strong advocacy "takes its toll," she said. "It's very hard fighting an establishment that has been in place since the beginning of time."

Some women have walked away, burnt out from trying earnestly to move federations to promote women to the highest leadership positions, both as volunteers and as professionals, "I am simply worn out," said one. "I'm going to put my energies into women's political organizations, and raise money for them, and for my college, where I'll be respected and listened to." The majority of Jewish career women feel that the Jewish community isn't supportive of them, according to a study by sociologist Rela Geffen Monson. which LILITH co-sponsored in the late 1980's. Monson asks the acid question: "Will these women continue to feed the hand that bites them?

Modesty

The strong statements of Lipitz and others who speak out for women's equality notwithstanding, all women tend to downplay their own accomplishments in conversation in order to establish personal connections with others, says Sondra Shaw, co-director of the Network on Women as Philanthropists. This general women's modesty, or an erasing of differences in order to find common ground, is especially true for Jewish women, who may have special reason to feel uneasy about going public with their philanthropy.

Women reveal in myriad ways that they want to belong to a group, not stand out from that group, when they make a philanthropic contribution. They do not usually want to be honored at a testimonial dinner, nor to be known for writing a check significantly larger than their friends'.

Many organizations report difficulty in getting a woman from among their ranks who's willing to be headlined as "woman of the year" or some such title in order to draw contributions from her associates. The greatest success in spurring women to raise their gifts is by making the increase part of a group process. UJA Women's Division has created Lion of Judah pins, with an eye in a different colored gem for each level of giving, recognizing gifts ranging from $5000 to $50,000. Women raise their contributions to meet each level of giving so that they can have membership in this "club." There is no "club tie" (for instance) to link the *men* who give at various levels. Similarly, the "Wall of Healing" at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem has encouraged women to contribute, but almost always on a par with their peers, not as exceptional philanthropists.

> *"Will women continue to feed the hand that bites them?"*
>
> *— Rela Geffen Monson*

A woman often tailors her charitable giving (at least her public giving) to the level of those around her. The modesty this bespeaks is admirable, but the liabilities are twofold. First, in sharp contrast to men's competitive giving, women often do not give as much as they are able to because they don't want to be seen as richer than their friends (a woman of substantial means, who lives very modestly in a New York suburb, says that she keeps her giving anonymous "the same way I wouldn't automatically assume when I go to the theater with my friends that they'll be able to afford orchestra seats. I don't want them to feel uncomfortable because I can buy something they can't."). Second, although Maimonides proposed that the highest from of *tzedakah* is anonymous, with neither donor nor recipient known to one another, anonymous giving is not a precept much subscribed to in Jewish life today. If almost all contributions come from individuals whose charity is known, and if women are uneasy about making relatively large contributions, the result is a paucity of women role models for others who might then see themselves as able to make large contributions too.

Some have suggested that women fear success as men fear failure. Earning or giving away markedly more money than your peers feels dangerous, too "out there" for many women. The line about women's writing may hold for philanthropy too: "Anonymous was a woman."

Some of this is women's modesty or uneasiness in general about standing out—if you're too smart or too pretty something bad will happen to you. But there's a distinctively Jewish piece here too—an uneasiness around money that suggests that it's a arena fraught with peril.

The linking of Jews and money represents a danger area for many Jews. A good deal of anti-Semitism has focused on caricatures of Jews as rich and—worse—venal, selfish, and acquisitive. Jewish women have been the special victims of this classical anti-Semitism in the guise of "JAP" jokes, with their pernicious amalgam of anti-Semitism and misogyny. The existence of these stereotypes may explain something about Jewish women's uneasiness about being visible as donors an "exceptional" contribution, especially to a non-Jewish charity.

Women of inherited wealth — what worries them?

Women born into wealth often don't feel the money is theirs. One woman said that she felt like "an impostor." Another said that she didn't want any recognition or honors for the large sums of money she gives away because "I never felt it was really mine." Valerie Tishman Diker, a New York philanthropist who has explored her growing Jewish consciousness in *Journey to the Heart*, says of her inherited money, "When I was younger I pretended that the money wasn't there. That's what my father always told me to do."

The story of Rita Poretsky of Philadelphia, namesake of a foundation set up after her death to fund a variety of Jewish women's projects, echoes this. "She never felt as if she owned this vast amount of money while she was alive," says Arlene Agus, a trustee of the foundation. "She never spent any of it. She lived very modestly. And now, with the foundation, she's become a philanthropist posthumously." Jewish men who have inherited wealth do not express these concerns; perhaps because they more often enter the family business and therefore "own" the money more than their sisters do.

Feminist philanthropist Tracy Gary has created a service organization, "Managing Inherited Wealth," to help address the discomfort and shame some women (Jewish and non-Jewish alike) feel about having large sums of money they themselves did not earn. Women with inherited wealth are learning that they don't have to be passive conduits for money; they can wield good power as philanthropists.

Fundraisers are often unaware of the anxieties women with inherited wealth may feel about money. A New England woman says that she refused to contribute last year to a Jewish philanthropy she'd supported regularly because a man called her for her pledge and told her the sum she was expected to give. "Deciding how much I want to give is one of the few things I can determine for myself in this world. I was furious with him." Her instincts were generous, but the style of the asking pushed her away, and took away from her the locus of control

How about women who earn the money they give away?

While women with inherited wealth are sometimes uneasy about broadcasting their assets ("How can I be an activist and also "out" as a woman of

wealth?" asked one woman in her early forties), women who have earned the money they are giving away are often elated and flattered to be asked for substantial sums. "When they realized that they could give $1500 and be part of the "pomegranate level" (with its own brooch), working women in Santa Barbara "were thrilled," said Barbara Zonen, executive director of the Santa Barbara Federation.

"I made a big pledge to UJA this year, and it was my *pleasure* to do so," said a Chicago woman who is a banker. "I went on a mission to Eastern Europe and I increased my gift, and it was my *pleasure*; after I went to Israel I increased it again. I was so *happy* that I could do this!" Her satisfaction was fully evident—she was beaming when she described her growing philanthropic commitment. Eleanor Dubin of Long Island, who has been active both for Jewish causes and as chair of a Ronald McDonald House, says that she is "thrilled" when a woman announces a large contribution." I get very excited when I find out that a woman is earning so much that she can give a big sum. Philanthropy makes me feel good. Some people may want a major diamond or something like that; for me the excitement is being able to write a check to a good cause."

Because so little effort has been made to identify and encourage the philanthropy of career women, synagogue president Betty Byrnes of San Diego quips that "the biggest beneficiary of women's gifts has been the IRS." Women entrepreneurs and professionals represent a class that should be courted avidly by fundraisers, though this is not yet widespread in the Jewish community.

Career women, by and large, still do not have the resources for philanthropy that men do. One women in Rhode Island said that she had turned down the presidency of her synagogue (she'd have been its first woman president), because she realized that "all the men who have held this job had offices and secretaries from their business lives. I am not yet in a position in my business where I have enough employees to spare one to work for me in my role at the synagogue. An invisible contribution to charity is the unremunerated work performed by the secretaries and business employees of the Jewish male leader."

Women in the workforce understand how little attention is paid to women's needs. Jewish career women active in feminist organizations are likely to support women's causes over traditional Jewish organizations and federations, according to Rela Geffen Monson. It stands to reason that these women are more likely to give to a Jewish organization if there is a women's component to the institution or program. "Women lawyers don't give to Operation Exodus [the fund to help rescue and resettle Russian Jews]," complained one woman volunteer active in UJA's women's division. "Have you tried telling them about the Op Ex work in mentoring—making a match between Russian professional women just arriving in Israel and their Israeli counterparts who are already established in their careers?" asked an observer. The reply: "It never occurred to me." By choosing to emphasize an area these North American professional women identify with—women's struggles to advance in a male world—solicitors can spur greater involvement and greater giving. Linda Kern, a marketing consultant who has organized a group of Jewish business and professional women in Knoxville, Tennessee, says, "In terms of numbers, if B and P women were marketed to correctly, they'd make a big difference in federations nationally—probably another $100 million a year!"

There's a special opportunity for complementarity now: unlike in past generations, where women of achievement might have had advantages of higher levels of education or opportunities not available to their peers, there are not marked differences between full-time volunteers and women who are in the paid workforce (the majority of Jewish women). The women who aren't working for pay may be wealthier, but they have the same education, usually, as the business and professional women, so that they look at them and can legitimately say: "I could have made her choices. I could be running a movie studio today too. Or whatever." One of the reasons that the 1992 elections were so empowering for many women whose philanthropy had until that point been directed exclusively to Jewish causes was that they felt they were real players on the national scene, and that they were, clearly, moving in the same milieu as the career women who were their cousins, neighbors or college classmates.

A new development gives a clue that career women are ready to reach for their checkbooks as well as for their appointment books: A Long Island UJA/Federation business and professional women's group is publishing a network directory—you have to give a minimum of $500 to the "campaign" to be included, plus pay a $36 listing fee. Directories like this have been tried in the past simply as a networking tool, as part of providing service and appealing to these women. Now the women leaders understand that the women have money to give, and that they are willing to make their contributions to participate in the directory.

Time and money complement one another

It's a truism of fundraising that a woman will first get involved with a project and then give money. After a man becomes a

RESOURCES

Books

Contemporary Jewish Philanthropy in America, Barry Kosmin and Paul Ritterband, eds., Rowman and Littlefield, 1991. (See especially "Patterns of Giving of Some Jewish Career Women," by Rela Geffen Monson.)

Jewish Environmental Scan: Toward the Year 2000. Council on Jewish Federations, 730 Broadway, New York, NY 10002

Lady Bountiful Revisited: Women, Philanthropy and Power, Kathleen D. McCarthy, ed., Rutgers University Press, 1990.

Trends in American Jewish Philanthropy: Market Research Analysis, 1992 (Prepared for the United Jewish Appeal) Center for Modern Jewish Studies Policy and Planning. Brandeis University, Waltham, MA 02254

Women's Culture, Kathleen D. McCarthy, Chicago University Press, 1991.

Organizations Studying Women's Philanthropy

Center for the Study of Philanthropy
City University of New York, 33 West 42nd Street, New York, NY 10036

Center for Women and Philanthropy
University of Wisconsin-Madison
816 State Street, Madison, WI 53706

Forum on Women in Philanthropy
Indiana University Center on Philanthropy
550 W. North Street, Suite 301,
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3162

Independent Sector
1828 L Street NW, Suite 1200,
Washington, D.C. 20036

National Council for Research on Women
530 Broadway, 10th floor
New York, NY 10021

Program on Nonprofit Organizations
Yale University, Box 154, Yale Station
New Haven, CT 06520-0154

Resourceful Women and *Managing Inherited Wealth*
3543-18th Street
Box 9, San Francisco, CA 94110

Women and Foundations/Corporate Philanthropy
322 Eighth Avenue, Suite 702
New York, NY 10012

donor he is asked to come to events, sit on committees, and and participate in the organization's agenda.

Given this differential, the loss of volunteer participation by women in Jewish organizations in the past two decades means a decline in the pool of women donors. It's a chicken-and-egg situation.With few outstanding women in leadership positions in these organizations (both women's and co-ed) other women don't join. If there are no new members, there are no fresh donors. Without money the organization can't advance the kind of women's agenda that would appeal to new members.

In the past, "Going to meetings and lectures and programs gave a woman something interesting to bring to the dinner table," says Judy Sloan, a hospital executive, a trustee of Brandeis University and a highly successful fundraiser for UJA and other causes. "For a generation of well-educated Jewish women who didn't have jobs, their volunteer activity made them more interesting in their own social circles." Philanthropy was a way of seizing some power—or at least some of the dinner-table-podium time—in the family.

"No time" is an important reason why Jewish women volunteer less than they used to, and less than non-Jewish women. Unlike other women, who may decide to have their children, and then resume their careers, or to establish their careers and put off children, Jewish women seemed determined to do everything at once—responding to two Jewish imperatives: "Make something of yourself!" and "Produce grandchildren!"

Even high-profile business women and Hollywood executives feel the conflicting pulls on their time if they want to be involved in the Jewish community. Judy Adler Sheer, in charge of "major gifts" at the national headquarters of UJA, has helped gather together a Women of Distinction group for UJA. She reports that "Like most women, these highly successful Jewish women see community activity as taking away from their family. With men, their community activities are seen to be part of their business life—and present no conflict at all with family responsibilities."

Where female and male philanthropy intersect — the couple

Gender equality certainly makes itself felt in a household's approach to philanthropy. The majority of Jewish women both make independent financial decisions and will influence their husband' giving. But the woman's role in spurring a "family" contribution is underreported and therefore undervalued. "No one asks how the decision to give was reached," notes Sylvia Barack Fishman.

Partnership is the model for most Jewish couples. Jewish women are likely to be in more egalitarian marriages than are women of other ethnic or religious groups. "Jewish men don't marry down," comments Nicki Newman Tanner. This means wives are likely to make family financial decisions along with their husbands, and advocate for causes they want their husbands to support. It also means that a Jewish wife is likely to feel entitled to make philanthropic donations in her own right and in her own name, even if she is not earning at par with her husband, or not earning at all.

One woman announced, "I don't worry about giving away "his" money anymore. In the early years of our marriage I used to think that all I had to give was time, and that the money belonged more to him because he was out there working for it. Then after living with him all these years I began to see the truth—I keep him sane so he can go out there and make that money!" Another woman interviewed says, "I give to more liberal causes, politically and in the Jewish community [this is true of Jewish women generally]. Whenever my husband writes a check for the more conservative ones he supports, I write a check for the same amount to something I support. I guess it's my way of saying we're equal, even though he's the one who earns the money."

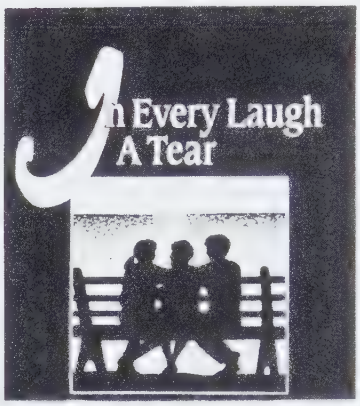
For at least two of the women interviewed, income earned from salary and interest on inherited money provided a fund used exclusively to support causes their husbands wouldn't have assisted. These women were politically more liberal than their husbands and used the money for women's projects, pro-choice programs and feminist political causes.

Jewish women are unrecognized spurs to their husbands' charitable giving,and several high-profile donors reported that men who approach their husbands for contributions to Jewish charities ignore them. On a UJA "mission" to Israel last year, the person sent to solicit one couple said to the husband, "Oh just let your wife enjoy the beach. You and I will talk.". Since the woman, known to be a successful fundraiser herself, was well aware of her own role in helping to determine how much her husband would give, she says, "I decided just to stay back and see what happened." In many case what happens is that the gift might have been larger had the solicitor thought to include the wife too. "The Jewish community," says Nicki Newman Tanner, "just doesn't read women's role in family philanthropy correctly."

Lynn Kroll, a UJA supporter known for her support of educational programs and Jewish schools, corroborates this in describing one of her own experiences in a "couple solicitation." "I kept trying to send the soliciti-

(continued on page 29)

Lesléa Newman's
long-awaited novel



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Inheriting FUR

Fur is a loaded topic for everyone these days, but for Jewish women it has long been laden with meaning. For our grandmothers (or mothers) it was often a symbol of arrival, of having made it — perhaps it was the one luxury our self-sacrificing foremothers allowed themselves after years of making do. So we've inherited these coats, and they hang in our hallway closets.

Remember those childhood hours you spent stroking it, sitting next to Mom or Bubbe in *shul*? We have complicated feelings about the furs. (A friend of ours wore hers for the last time when someone shouted at her, "How'd you get the blood out?") Did you send your inherited fur off the Salvation Army, but now feel badly about it? Though it's unclear that fur is any worse than leather, down, or even high pollutant human-made fibers like thinsulate or polyethylene, fur's high visiblity/high indulgence factor particularly invites scorn. It feels so good as we brush past it in the closet; it reminds us of Ma at Benjy's Bar Mitzvah — but we could never *wear* it. Tel-Aviv Chief Sephardic rabbi, Haim David Halevi, recently issued a compassionate ruling that since Jewish law forbids the causing of pain to animals, the manufacture and wearing of fur coats is forbidden. What's a daughter or granddaughter to do?

The following story and vignettes tackle the issue.

THE POCKET REVEALS ITS SECRET

by Sara Nuss-Galles

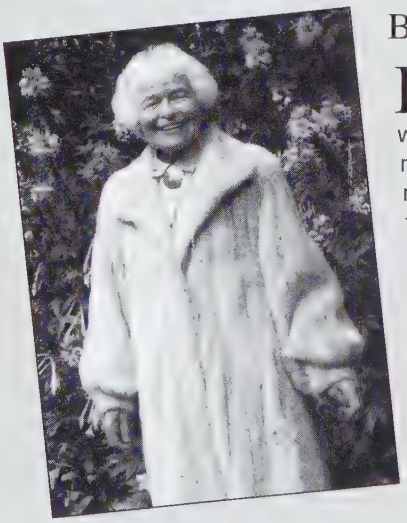
She rarely wore it,
guarding it like a hen
her chicks.

For women of her time and place, a mink coat was the ultimate status symbol. Whatever sufferings these Holocaust survivors had endured, during either the war or the nights and days of their new lives in America, the fur coat, trite as it may have been to some, was a mighty symbol of security. In my mother's case, this security did not extend to very many material objects. She permitted herself few comforts, walking long distances to save pennies, forgoing the bus even when the groceries were heavy and the weather unfriendly, working in a quickly darkening room rather than "wasting the light," and rarely eating anything when it was fresh and tempting — she preferred to wait until the family had finished to see what was left over. And, when it came to her wardrobe, her everyday clothes had seen far too many washings and pressings. Making do was a philosophy of life for my mother.

My parents came to America in 1951. Right from the beginning they worked in a variety of jobs and, finally, in their own business, often fourteen hours a day, seven days a week. Much as we four children labored to awaken them to the American practice of taking a summer vacation, it never worked. To close up the store, to abandon their comfortable apartment, to go sleep in strange beds and be at the mercy of restaurants (to them "restaurant" was a four letter word), was "*mishigas*," craziness. It was widely known among their circle of immigrant friends that restaurants served all manner of "*chazerai*," slop worthy only of pigs, often spoiled, from kitchens which would ruin your appetite had you the misfortune to enter them. And special holidays, like Mother's or Father's day, don't even ask! These were the times when the worst of the "*chazerai*" was served to people who took their parents out in order to poison them and get the "*yirisheh*," inheritance, sooner. No, this sleeping and eating in the streets was not one of the Americanizations adopted by our family.

The author's parents, 1965.

My parents too often responded to my Americanized needs with their party line: "*Vos noch darfst die?* What else do you need? You have a roof, a bed and potatoes." Little did they know the list that I had formulated. I needed so many things which they dismissed as "*narischkeit*," nonsense. I gladly would have traded my "plenty," as they saw it, for a leaky cabin in South Haven, Michigan one summer weekend, a sleeping bag on a camp-out in the woods, or a cheeseburger with the works and a cherry coke at any Howard Johnson's, anywhere. So many American symbols of arrival were viewed with suspicion in our family that it was quite startling when sometime in the 'sixties my mother began admiring and expressing interest in the mink coats of other women in my parents' circle. Their social life was limited to visiting back and forth at friends' homes, weddings and bar mitzvahs (bat mitzvahs were as yet uncommon in their milieu) and the one or two dances held each year by the "*greeneh*," newcomers' organizations. So



BUBBA INVESTS IN A MINK

Last year my mother got a call from her mother. Bubba sounded strange — almost as if she were about to cry. "Jeannie," she began, pausing to give her words the proper weight, "I'm at Epstein's. They're having a sale." This being not particularly exceptional, my mother waited. "A sale on fur coats," Bubba went on. "I'm standing here in a gorgeous white mink coat! They say it looks perfect on me! And it's so cheap! Oh Jeannie, I've never had a fur coat — it's so gorgeous — and you know I never spend money on myself. . . I've been so cold these winters . . . ."

Gradually it became clear to my mother that Bubba was asking her for permission to buy the mink. Firmly committed to sacrifice as a way of life, Bubba needed someone else's okay to indulge herself. "It's an investment, you know," she continued, "they're having such a sale, and when I'm gone it will be yours, and then Karen's and Tamar's."

"Mommy, I don't want a fur coat," answered my mother. "I don't like fur coats. Get it for yourself — you want it and you'll be warm."

"Really? I should do it? Oh, I just don't know. . . ."

"Mommy, just buy the coat. Enjoy it."

"Okay, Jeannele. I can't wait to show it to you. . . Oh I can't believe this — you know I never spend money on myself. . . ."

The next weekend Bubba brought the coat, an event so momentous she arranged for a ride to our house rather than taking the usual two buses. She modeled it for us, then had me try it on (my mother refused). I had never worn a fur coat before, and could not believe how luxurious it felt; I couldn't stop stroking my arms. I felt like the Ukrainian *krasavitza* [beauty] Bubba and her sisters called me when they got together and spoke Russian.

I haven't seen the coat since that weekend; Bubba can't seem to bring herself to wear it; it's "too good." So the investment hangs in her closet, waiting for my mother, or so Bubba hopes. I keep hoping that this winter Bubba will wear it — at least once.

—Karen Prager

HOW TO HONOR THE DEAD

Barbara Colgan of Hopewell, New Jersey, noticed that a lot of women she knew had the same dilemma — what to do with Grandma's fur coat hanging in the attic. Her observations soon turned into a full-time retirement career: transforming fur coats into teddy bears. For one hundred and thirty dollars, Colgan will recycle your inheritance into a custom-made 14 to 18 inch teddy bear (this is one big teddy bear!), complete with Plexiglas child-proof eyes, jointed arms and legs (husband David does the jointing), and birth announcement. ("You can name the bear after Grandma.") "Send me the whole coat," says Colgan, "and I'll make lots of bears out of it — one for every daughter and granddaughter in the family. I deal only," she adds shyly, "in memories." Dividing one sable coat into 4 or 5 equal bear parts serves to solve that mathemathical puzzler, too—who gets the single undesirable object?

Colgan says that just about everyone is completely stumped by what to do with inherited fur—even thrift shops. ("Nobody buys the old furs, plus they take up too much rack space.") Elderly customers sometimes bring their own furs to Colgan, knowing that none of their children wants to inherit them: The coats will get closeted for years, and then dumped, all to the tune of dysgenic guilt. "But *no one*," says Colgan, "throws out a mink teddy bear."

Bronya Zagrabelna, 1912, holding potential teddy bear.

Jewish women may feel some anxiety over the perceived in-group nature of such privileged dilemmas. Colgan is reassuring. "The most commonplace memory that people seem to have, when they talk to me about the furs they've inherited, is of stroking their hands over Granny's coat while standing next to her in church."

Sewing and stuffing each bear from scratch (each one takes four days to make), Colgan asks customers individualized questions: "Do you have an antique doily of your grandmother's? This bear would look so pretty in a ruffly lace collar." Her most recent transformation was a Persian lamb coat (again, Grandma's) with a gray mink collar; it became three Persian lamb teddy bears (one per granddaughter) with mink-tipped ears. (Having identical bears in three different cousins' bedrooms is, in itself, touching.) A fur coat's brocade lining makes very silky foot pads. "I've done Dad's tweed winter coat and Grandpa's plaid wool fishing jacket, too," adds Colgan, "but recycled furs are the most wonderful."

To further problem-solve this endangered-breed/sentimental-kitsch dialectic, contact Barbara Colgan, The World's Smallest Teddy Bear Factory, P.O. Box 483, 10 Eaton Place, Hopewell, NJ 08525. 609-466-0411.

— Susan Schnur

> No coat had ever kept me so warm before — and I knew that it was not just the fur, but the comfort of knowing that it had been worn by my mother.

what was this sudden burning interest in a mink? Children were not asked their opinions in our family and before I knew it my mother had a richly hued full length mink coat with a large shawl collar and, best of all in my eyes, exquisite rhinestone buttons.

It looked lovely on her, made her feel like a queen, and was the perfect just-below-the-knee length which fit the short hemlines of the time. To my mother it was such an "oitser [treasure]" that she rarely wore it, saving it for only the most special of occasions, and then, guarding it like a hen her chicks. Having never had her name or initials embroidered into the lining as some women did, she lived in constant fear of the coat being mistakenly, if not purposely, taken. So, when she finally did wear it, it was like having a baby all over again. No daycare for this baby; the coat never saw the interior of a cloak room. Either she held it, sat with it, or, if moved to dance, circled only within a small radius of her mink —and even then her eyes never left it. In my mind, it was an albatross, but to her, it was a beloved symbol of how far she had come in the new world.

In 1984, my dear mother died. The question of what to do with her precious coat arose, and my sister and I discussed its disposition. It was by then some twenty years old and quite outmoded, so neither one of us rushed to claim it. We thought about having it remodeled and, as I was living a somewhat bohemian life style and took forever to deal with such things, we both agreed that my sister would take the coat and have it redone.

Five years passed and I had pretty much forgotten the coat until the strong anti-fur lobby aroused both my sympathy and my memory of my mother's mink. It was with a youngest sibling's great pleasure that I discovered that I was not the only procrastinator in the family. After the most casual of inquiries about alterations, my sister had hung the coat in an extra closet and promptly forgotten it. When I asked her about it, she admitted that she had decided against remodeling the coat and probably would never use it. I put the coat on and noticed that something had changed since the last time I tried it on. In recent years I had grown partial to retro styles, and the clothing that was popular when I was young held great charm for me. The coat was definitely dated; too full, too short, with too large a shawl collar. It was just "too" — if June Cleaver had ever owned a mink coat, this surely would have been it. I decided that I loved it. Would I wear it?. . . now that was a tougher question.

My sister graciously offered me our mother's coat and I accepted. However, when I got it home, I had trouble deciding when and where I would indeed wear it. I felt somewhat uncomfortable wearing fur and knew that I couldn't wear it into the city where the anti-fur activists were sure to pounce on me. Would they understand my dilemma when I explained that I didn't purchase the coat; rather I wore it because it had been my mother's and wearing it made me feel closer to her? I doubted it. Torn between the desire to wear my

mother's coat and my own confused feelings, I undertook a mission of stealth and decided to wear it under cover of darkness on the late night walks I took with my husband.

The winter was brutal — the coldest in many years. Still, despite the cold, I could forgo a hat and raise the shawl collar around my head, feeling enveloped and hugged. How wonderfully toasty I felt. No coat had ever kept me so warm before—and I knew that it was not just the fur, but the comfort of knowing that it had been worn by my mother. I had worn the coat two or three times before I thrust my hand into the pocket late one night as we were about to walk out the door. I felt something in the pocket and stepped back into the light to see what I had discovered: a yellowing book of matches from the Hilton Hotel in Chicago—where my parents lived—and a small wear-softened square of paper. I unfolded the paper and recognized my mother's distinctive European handwriting. Tears sprang to my eyes. She had carefully written down her name, "Mrs. P. Nuss, her address and phone number. Why in the world. . . and suddenly it came to me. She had always feared the loss of her precious mink and since her name was nowhere on it, she had inscribed it on this little piece of paper, hoping the note would help the coat find its way home if ever they were separated.

It was eleven o'clock on a cold winter night and I stood in the hallway crying tears of confusion, pain, and joy. I was swaddled in my mother's mink coat, clutching to my face a scrap of paper bearing her precious writing which she had held in her own hands who knew how many years ago. I was flooded with love and longing for her; and with something else: the inexplicable joy of miraculously receiving a note from my dear mother whom I never expected to hear from in this way again.

For many months a small brass picture frame I found in a drawer had stood on a living room end table, empty. I don't know what possessed me to display an empty frame, but suddenly, as I stood in the hallway, the frame's purpose became clear. I took the note I had just received from my mother and slid it into the frame, under the glass. I felt good. . . very good; and, raising the shawl collar, I pulled the coat tighter, buttoned those beautiful rhinestone buttons, and went out for a walk in the cold night air with my husband.

Sara Nuss-Galles *is a writer living with her husband, Arie Galles, an artist, and two college-age children in Madison, NJ.*

ROVER'S WORLD

When I was around 18, my father one day announces, "Now that you're a woman, it's time you got a fur coat. We're gonna do it today. Get dressed." Of course my mother and grandmother had furs (when I was a kid I loved to warm my hands under their armpits). So my Dad and I go to Bonwit-Teller—this is Chicago. Just the two of us. And we sit in a chair and an old-fashioned saleswoman *brings* furs to us—you don't go through racks in the fur salon at Bonwit's. I tried on lots. I was kind of in a blur.

I settle on a feathered raccoon, very high collar you could lose yourself in. The coat zips in half so it can be either calf-length, or thigh-length and sporty. We buy a big leather belt to go with it. The coat has three little eyelets that close it.. It costs $2000 and I wear it home. I feel so incredibly grown up. I name the coat Rover.

Now of course I was a nature person, a tomboy. My idea of pleasure was to lie in the woods and pick worms out of the dirt. At age 13, I had decided I would never shave my legs or under my arms. I was a canoeist, a wilderness person, certainly not pampered. Naturally I didn't want to take Rover off with me to college (to Duke)—I didn't want other people to see me this way; I didn't see myself this way.

Once when I was in New York with my mother, she was physically harrassed by a group of anti-fur picketers. I had to defend my mother. I'd taken karate for years.

But every time I came home to Chicago, I stepped back into Rover's world. I would wear Rover when I was with my parents. My mother and grandmother and I would all be in our furs, and we'd ride in my Dad's Cadillac.

As I got older, I wore Rover less and less. The coat stayed in Chicago in my parents' closet. I didn't want it. My folks kept trying to send Rover to me, but I said no. Once when I was in New York with my mother, she was physically harassed by a group of anti-fur picketers in front of the Colliseum. I had become a staunch environmentalist by then, but I had to defend my mother physically, which I did. I'd taken karate for years.

When I was 32, my mother died, and my father decides to bring Rover out to me in Princeton (where I live), and my mother's fur coats too. My Mom's mink went to my father's sister. I got my Mom's cloth-outside-fur-inside coat, very classy, beautiful. I put both Rover and my mother's coat into storage where they remained for four years. It cost me like fifty dollars a year just to store them.

One day the storage place closes for repainting, so I end up with Rover again and I drive it to a second-hand shop. I clip out the little brass plate with my name on it that was sewn into the lining—just in case Rover should ever cycle back to my father.

Rover remained in the second-hand shop all winter; no one bought it. Which made me upset. I felt huffy. I was trying to sell it for hardly anything—$300. I mean its entire life had been spent in storage. So then I shlep it, the thing weighs a million tons, to a thrift shop and I *give* Rover to them as a donation. "Do nice people buy here?" I ask the saleswoman. I wanted someone nice to have the coat, someone who would give Rover a good home. She says, "Honey, *I* don't know who shops here." So there goes Rover.

So now I still have my mother's cloth-outside-fur-inside coat. It's hanging in my closet like a corpse. I can't wear it. I can't get rid of it; it wouldn't be nice to my mother. So there it is. Isn't this funny? So this is my crazy fur story.

I have to admit that Rover did afford me a great deal of pleasure. When my Dad bought it for me, I knew it was a great gift of love. Rover was my Dad's acknowledgement of me as a woman. I had no idea then that I wouldn't be that kind of woman at all.

—as told to Susan Schnur by Liz Cutler

THE RASHOMON COAT TALE

by Deborah Solomon

It was a sable, said my father—a sable coat that my grandmother went to Siberia to buy. Five thousand rubles, said my father—all the proceeds from the sale of the store. She sold the store to join my grandfather in America, he said, and she bought the coat to carry with her and sell for sustenance in the new world.

She went on the train to Siberia—unheard of for a woman in those days, said my father—picked out the skins, had them made into a coat, had the fur coat sewn inside a cloth coat and, wearing both coats and shepherding her four children (two boys and two girls), crossed overland to the Black Sea and boarded a ship bound, eventually, for Philadelphia.

His mother, he said, was intelligent and not beautiful. The photograph shows a long face with a narrow forehead, small eyes, a large jaw, and a gentle mouth. When she was fifteen, said my father, she concluded, from observing the world around her, that god was either evil or did not exist. When she told this to her father she was disowned, handed her dowry tied up in a kerchief, and told to depart.

> Disowned at fifteen, she was handed her dowry tied up in a kerchief, and told to depart.

The family was prominent in the village. Its surname was Hispanic—the residue of some Portuguese ancestor flung east by the Inquisition and left for dead in the dark Russian forest. How did they know he was Portuguese? I asked my father, years later. Who said he was Portuguese? he asked. You. Well, I thought it sounded more interesting than Spanish. Then the family was really from Spain? Who knows? he said.

The Family, Philadelphia, circa 1912.

My grandmother, carrying the kerchief with her dowry inside, walked alone down a narrow path through the dark forest of the Pale until she came to another village—Khruscha, said my father. The map today shows no such village. With the rubles wrapped in the kerchief, she purchased supplies, opened a general store, and became, within a few years, a woman of substance.

She lived alone in a small house at the end of the village. At the end of the fields beyond her gate, the forest began. Wolves moved softly in the shadows, just out of sight. Gypsies camped among the trees. They bought cloth at the store, and my grandmother stitched the panels into tents for them on her small treadle machine—the only one in Khruscha. Peasants visited too—to buy the gunpowder she sold illegally. (Years later, one of them warned her of a pogrom and offered to hide her children in his hayloft. She drove them there in her wagon, but the pogrom never came; it had chosen a larger village.)

In due course, my grandmother married. My grandfather was handsome and simple, with a fierce temper. She was lucky to get him, people said. At twenty-six, prosperous and plain, she was an old maid. He was 20.

Three children were born. My grandmother was pregnant with a fourth–my father—when word came that the Czar's recruiters had already reached the borders of the province. It was known, even in Khruscha, that one did not refuse an offer from the Czar and that Jews taken by his army never returned.

My grandfather made plans for his flight. He would go to Argentina—there was family there. Rubles wrapped in a kerchief were delivered to a cousin who worked for the steamship company. The cousin booked passage for my grandfather on a ship out of Riga, and traveled to Khruscha to deliver the ticket in person.

A week later my father was born. My grandfather stayed for the circumcision. That night he crept into the forest and headed west.

The path widened as he walked along and he reached Riga with days to spare. The cousin had written the name of a rooming house on a crumpled slip of paper. My grandfather showed it to people on the street. Eventually, someone who spoke Yiddish gave him directions.

At the rooming house were also other people waiting to depart. Among them was a woman from a village not far from Khruscha. Her husband, she said, had left the year before, made his fortune as a paperhanger in a place called Philadelphia, and had sent for his family to join him.

When my grandfather reached America, she said, he could work for her husband and board at their house. A man from Khruscha, she said, was a man who could be trusted. My grandfather was readily convinced. He traded his ticket to Buenos Aires for one to New York.

He failed to inform my grandmother of his change in plans. The ship bound for the Argentine sank with all on board. When the cousin at the steamship company saw the report, he traveled to Khruscha to tell my grandmother in person. She observed the month of mourning and resumed her mercantile life.

Eventually a letter arrived. My grandfather was living in a place called Philadelphia and selling fruit from a pushcart. When he had sold enough oranges and bananas, he wrote (no one in Khruscha could translate this second word but everyone agreed it must be some kind of fruit), he would send for them.

Years passed. My father spent his days at the store by his mother's side. As he grew, she would talk to him about her life and other things he was too young to understand. When he was three, another letter came: all was ready.

My grandmother sold the store. Take the money and buy shoes, said the people in Khruscha. Shoes are rare in America, they said, and bring a good price. Instead, she got on a train to Siberia and, as I said before, bought a sable coat.

For three weeks across the ocean, three decks down, she wore the cloth coat with the sable coat inside. It was hot and she was seasick and not allowed on deck, but she never removed the coat, not even when she slept.

My father was no longer at her side. Still nursing when they

boarded, he had been sent with his older brother to the men's quarters on the other side of the hold. He would avoid ocean travel for the rest of his life.

In America, my grandfather was waiting. He had grown a beard. Who is the old Jew? my father asked. My grandfather caught him up in his arms. My father began to cry.

The family traveled to South Philadelphia, where my grandfather lived in a single room. He had bought extra furniture to welcome his family—a table, two chairs, and a second bed. The next morning, my grandmother walked out into the new world wearing the cloth coat with the sable coat inside. She returned with only the outer coat on her back. The sable had been sold for $5000; she had thrown in my grandfather's pushcart for free.

> Take the money and buy shoes, said the people in Kruscha. Shoes are rare in America. Instead, she bought a sable coat.

The next day, she rented a storefront where my grandfather's oranges and bananas could go on permanent display. She then walked into a large building nearby and wandered through the halls until she heard a man speaking Yiddish. It was a hospital and he ran the kitchen. By the time she left, he had agreed to buy his produce from her.

As the pushcart dissolved into the storefront, the storefront gave way to a walk-in grocery store, which became another and then another and finally four. In South Philadelphia, said my father, they called this a chain.

The family prospered and my grandmother decided to do what the Americans did: use the money on hand to make more. She asked my father—always a good student—to translate the stock market listings into Yiddish, then made her choices, tripled her stake, and sold out. This was in September, 1929.

Seeking more tangible holdings, she plowed her profits in land—a vacant corner lot at the edge of the neighborhood for $1100. For twenty years, the weeds grew. Then the Pennsylvania Railroad offered $10,000. She refused. The offer rose. At $100,000, she sold; my grandfather had threatened divorce if she did not. (She had planned to hold out for $1100 more to recoup her investment.)

On this sum, the two retired and moved to Atlantic City, where, with children and grown grandchildren—most of them prosperous and some even prominent in the community—they lived comfortably, strolling on the boardwalk and playing gin. My grandmother always won and my grandfather always threw down his cards and charged her with cheating.

There is a picture. They sit side by side on straight chairs placed slightly apart on a wide clipped lawn in front of a Tudor-style house. She wears a housedress and white orthopedic shoes. They look straight into the camera's eye. Eventually, they died.

Of the four children who had crossed the ocean, three survived. The younger of the two girls, never strong, died of tuberculosis at sixteen; the disease had been going round the tenement where they lived. It was for the best, they said. She was too frail for this hard, bright land. The two boys received scholarships to college.

The youngest son, the one born in America, never finished high school. Larger and simpler than the rest, he shepherded his siblings through the rough Irish streets that blocked the way to school, and ended up running underground garages in apartment houses his oldest brother built.

The oldest brother became a contractor, then owner of a steel company, then a millionaire, then city housing commissioner. He was convicted of having committed three felonies while in office—misfeasance, malfeasance, and nonfeasance. And what did he do?—asked his wife bitterly—he gave a job to his brother. Character witnesses were his only defense. He was placed on probation for a year. He remained president of the synagogue.

My father, the middle son, had never joined the congregation. At his Bar Mitzvah, he performed as required and then walked up the aisle and out of the hall. He never returned. The god who had let his sister die, he reasoned, was either evil or nonexistent.

My father went to medical school, married my mother—who was intelligent and not plain—became director of a large hospital, and grew rich (though not as rich as his older brother) and important. Eventually, he died.

At his funeral, I asked my aunt, his older sister, the one who had survived, about Khruscha and the crossing and the sable coat that had bridged two worlds. The family was dissolving and I needed to keep the stories clear.

What sable coat? she asked. I told her. I don't remember anything like that, she said. And the trip to Siberia? My aunt was shocked. In those days, she said, it was not safe for a woman in Russia to travel alone. My aunt had been ten at the time; if her mother had taken such a trip, she would have known.

They told her to take shoes, I prodded. Yes, she said, I do remember that. Shoes were handmade and very expensive then, and Mom had the cobbler in Khruscha make an extra pair for each of us in case we couldn't find any in America.

She came to Khruscha because she denounced god, I said. (I was afraid to ask about the Gypsies; I couldn't bear to lose them.) Where did you get that idea? asked my aunt. Mom was always observant—went to *shul*, kept kosher. No, she came to Khruscha because her father wouldn't let her marry the boy she wanted to because he was poor. Mom was so unhappy they sent her away to live with her married sister in Khruscha. It was the sister who arranged the marriage with Pop. He came from a good family; they ran the general store. The boy she loved came to America too. He's now a millionaire. Mom always kept track of him, even though he didn't live in Philadelphia.

My father never told me anything like that, I said. Maybe Mom never told him, said my aunt.

My aunt was intelligent and plain. She had married a man who was simple and handsome, with a sweet disposition. He turned out to be the son of the very woman my grandfather had met at the rooming house in Riga, the one who had lured him to America.

At sea, my grandfather had lost the slip of paper on which she had written her husband's address, and with it his chance to enter the paperhanging trade. It turned out the woman had long since died.

My aunt and uncle had three children. One son became a psychiatrist; the other killed himself in a motel room in Albuquerque. The daughter married well.

At my father's funeral, those who wanted to see the body had been invited into a separate room before the service began. My mother stared straight ahead as if she hadn't heard. My aunt was the only one who went. She emerged weeping.

My father had fallen and died in the street after several heart attacks as well as general physical decline. We found him laid out on the mortuary table with a rough gray sheet pulled up to his chest. His face was bruised and blotchy, with a large bloody spot where his cheek had hit the pavement. His skin was grayish-blue. The flesh

had already begun to withdraw from the skull. His nose was a hawk's beak. The softness and beguiling charm were gone, the harsh bones revealed.

I had the funeral director photograph him then. That was how I wanted to remember him—the basic design. As my aunt re-entered the funeral hall, I caught a glimpse of the face she had seen—smooth and powder pink—before the lid closed forever.

No, said my aunt. I don't remember any sable coat. She paused. Maybe it was another coat. When we got to Ellis Island, she said, there was one moment when we thought they wouldn't let us in. We had each been examined by the doctors—eyes and skin and lungs—and then sent on down the line. But then one of them told us to wait and came and took your father out of Mom's arms and stood him back up on the examining table. Mom was sure they'd found something wrong and we would all have to go back to Khruscha and live there forever. My sister began to cry.

The doctor called another doctor over and then an inspector, and then some others, and they all watched as the doctor turned your father slowly around and around on the table. And they were all smiling. You father was wearing a cap and a Russian coat trimmed with fur that Mom had made for him, said my aunt, and he looked so sweet.

And then, she said, the doctor picked your father up and carried him back to us in his little fur-trimmed Russian coat and put him back in Mom's arms. And the doctor smiled at all of us. And they let us through.

I could see them as she spoke—my father in his little Russian coat snug in the arms of my grandmother, the oldest brother walking by her side, the two girls, one sturdy, one frail, following behind. My grandmother is wearing a lush sable coat. The long hem drags a bit in the dust as she leads her family out into the American air, and the tips of the fur glisten in the hard, bright light.

Deborah Solomon *has been an actress, lawyer, science writer and newspaper editor. She lives in Newbury, VT, and is at work on a book about new mothers over 40.*

STATUS SYMBOL:
BEFORE FUR COATS, THERE WAS THE *SHTERNTIKHL*

From the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research Archives

In Europe some 150 years ago, another garment emerged as the quintessential symbol of Jewish matronly success for one generation— and the object of scorn for the next. The *shterntikhl,* (literally "forehead-kerchief"), also known as a *kopbinde* or a *bindalik,* was an elaborately ornamented head-covering worn by married Jewish women in Central and Eastern Europe from the late Middle Ages to the early nineteenth century. Not only did it function as a covering for the married woman's hair—a requirement of Jewish laws of female modesty—but it also served as a display of status.

Made of pearls, gems, and gold and silver thread, and worn by wealthy Ashkenazic women on holidays and other special occasions, *shterntikhlekh* often contained the bulk of a family's worth. Thus wearing a *shterntikhl* at community gatherings was a way of displaying one's fortunes.

However, during the *Haskalah* [the Jewish Enlightenment, beginning in the late eighteenth century], the *shterntikhl* was singled out by the first generation of modern Yiddish writers as a symbol of all that was wrong with traditional Jewish life. Indeed, the earliest surviving modern Yiddish novel, written by Yisroel Aksenfeld (circa 1840), is entitled *Dos Shterntikhl.* The novel offers biting social commentary on traditional shtetl values. In the preface to his novel, Aksenfeld suggests that this newly obsolete garment "be put in alcohol, to be exhibited one day," along with other outdated forms of Jewish costume, for future generations.

Thus, by the mid-nineteenth century, what had been a symbol of feminine modesty and status became a cultural relic, epitomizing class division, materialism, and the unjust treatment of women in the traditional Jewish community.

—Jeffrey Shandler

ADVERTISEMENT

Correction:
This poem appears in The Lilith Question: A Chapbook, *edited by Henny Wenkart, available from National Council of Jewish Women, 212-535-5900.*

LILITH

kicked myself out of paradise
left a hole in the morning
no note no goodbye

the man I lived with
was patient and hairy

he cared for the animals
worked late at night
planting vegetables
under the moon

sometimes he'd hold me
our long hair tangled
he kept me from rolling
off the planet

it was
always safe there
but safety

wasn't enough. I kept nagging
pointing out flaws
in his logic

he carried a god
around in his pocket
consulted it like
a watch or an almanac

it always proved
I was wrong

two against one
isn't fair! I cried
and stormed out of Eden
into history

the Middle ages
were sort of fun
they called me a witch
I kept dropping

in and out
of people's sexual fantasies

now
I work in New Jersey
take art lessons
live with a cabdriver

he says: baby
what I like about you
is your sense of humor

sometimes
I cry in the bathroom
remembering Eden
and the man and the god
I couldn't live with

ENID DAME

This poem, which ran with a typographical error in LILITH Summer 1991, is reprinted here in its entirety.

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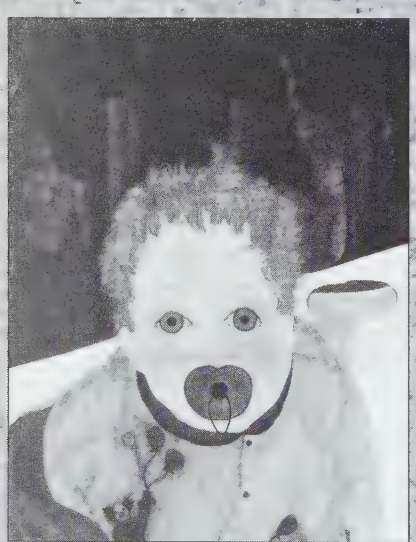
Surviving Incest in a Holocaust Family



Sandi Carter

BY "LILITH GOLDBERG"

On Friday nights, I light the Sabbath candles and recite the ancient blessings of thanks to God. I am alone in my contemplation of the spirit, eating in a shrouded silence. Through the loneliness of this weekly ritual, I mourn the loss of my family, the loss of my biological connectedness. Like my parents before me, I am a Holocaust survivor, unwittingly exposed to intense human evil.

It is an irony of my life that there are some memories that keep me alive, just as others challenge my desire to keep breathing, moving, feeling, existing.

On Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur and other holidays, I celebrate with my friends and lovers, remembering earlier times when I would skip and jump to synagogue in excited anticipation, my father carrying his prayershawl, my mother, prayerbooks in hand, and us—three sisters bringing up the rear, carefully avoiding cracks in the sidewalk. Yet this scene is a mirage, an unreality, a memory chosen to keep me alive. I also have many visual and auditory images of an unwritten Hell, a world so out of context, so terrifying to me that I "forgot" its existence for many years of my life.

I remember Nazi uniforms, barbed wire, gas ovens and bloodied carcasses. These horrifying images, scenery of an earlier era, were implanted upon me as a child. My father often forced me to act as the "humiliated," introducing me to Jewish bondage in a Nazi world, child bondage in a grown-up world. I was raped many times as a child—the penis hard, pressuring, pumping, burning my throat, ripping my vagina, my anus, breaking my heart, my trust in any adult.

I sought out explanations for my world, but none were available. Jewish families were depicted only as the haven, the refuge, the place of safety when one was confronted by anti-Semitism. I could never figure out where to run when the Jewish father raped his Jewish daughter.

My parents were immigrants in the late 1940's. They arrived in Canada from the displaced persons camps and were unfamiliar with both the language and culture of "America." They looked to their children as sources of support and understanding. We children offered them glimpses into the Gentile world, introducing them to Mother Goose and, later, Shakespeare. We were, in many ways, our parents' parents. And all of us were an isolated unit thrown together by outside forces beyond our control. So how could I possibly cry out "rape" in shame and agony, and expose my parents' crimes?

When I finally gathered the courage to leave home at age 17, my father called me the worst name he knew: TRAITOR. This accusation was perfectly consistent with my father's Holocaust orientation. After the loss of all but two of the one hundred members of his extended family, anyone who left the fold voluntarily could be considered nothing less.

Intellectually, I understand that my father—by doing to me exactly what had been done to him in the camps—was expressing cathartically his own pain and degradation. He was able to relive his experiences in a situation where *he* had control. Instead of being the child prostitute for the Gestapo, he was now the master himself. Instead of the starving waif hungering for onion and potato skins, he became the careless cook. He literally threw food at me—his hungry daughter—only to beat me minutes later for eating it.

There are days when I still believe that it is 1943 in Auschwitz or Dachau, and I go into a panic. My head aches terribly, my vision blurs, my heartbeat escalates and I am overcome with nausea. I am honestly of two worlds, unreconciled to either.

While my father was truly a victim, I still cannot forgive him his violations upon my body. I am filled with rage that I was made to suffer as he did.

Why did he do it???

There was a time when I assumed that my father was a rapist *because* of the Holocaust. From my discussions with other children of Holocaust survivors, I learned that many men in situations like my father's lived through the camps and did not sexually abuse their daughters. I can therefore no longer accept the Holocaust as an excuse for my own victimization.

It is true that after six years of slave labor, my father had an obsessive need to control. Because he is a male adult in a male-dominated, adult-oriented society, he was able to exercise his privilege over us, his young female children. Had we lived in a society that empowered women and children, perhaps my father's deep-seated need to control would have found a different "socially appropriate" outlet. Perhaps if Jews and other victims of Nazism had been valued beings, the Holocaust would never have occurred. Perhaps if my father had not been so violently tortured, I would not be writing today about sexual abuse.

(continued on page 23)

An Incest Survivor Reclaims Her Place in the Jewish Community

by Lilian Green

I am a person who loves to dance, who is stubborn, a writer, a woman, a Jew, the child of Holocaust survivors — my mother, who has a wicked sense of humor, my father, who says that the world is reborn on Rosh Hashana. I have blue eyes. I have a green thumb. I play the piano. I am thirty six years old, double *chai*, a survivor.

From the age of two until nine, I survived physical and sexual abuse from my grandmother. From ten to thirteen, I survived my big brother's sexual abuse. From twenty to thirty, I survived physical, sexual and psychological abuse by my (now ex-) husband.

I have read dozens of books and written a million words to understand how these pieces fit together. I have pounded pillows and wept. I have listened to experts and survivors. I have been frustrated, impatient, frightened, furious, anguished, amazed, excited, joyous, grateful and amused.

I am not unique, not even rare. Studies show that 15% to 19% of Jewish families, Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike, are abusive, a rate that is about the same as for non-Jewish families: Other women generally leave after three to five years of family violence, Jewish women stay eight to ten years, leaving in our thirties or forties, while our non-Jewish counterparts escape in their twenties.

Victims of child abuse are instructed by their perpetrators to blame themselves and to minimize or deny their experience. When the victim is Jewish, taught that abuse does not occur in her community, her guilt is doubled. She feels there must be something terrible in her to provoke her Jewish family to abuse her, or it must not have been as bad as she believed. Perhaps it never happened at all. She is primed for spousal abuse, feeling undeserving of love, distrusting her perceptions. She remains silent and hidden until someone gives her permission to speak.

In my case, permission came through therapy and participation in an incest survivor's group help at the Y.W.C.A. My need for a Jewish context led me to seek help at Jewish Family and Child Services, where I found my therapist. Through group and individual therapy, I learned to be myself — at least with my non-Jewish friends.

I had had little to do with the Jewish community for years, believing that I had no place there. It was hurtful to be cut off from my people, my religion, my roots. To reconnect, however, was a risk. Would the entire community react to me as my family had, with disdain and disbelief? Would my worst fears be confirmed, that in fact I did not belong?

When I grew strong enough to risk it, I looked for a place that fit my values, I joined a Reconstructionist synagogue.

It was difficult to attend shul at first. It was the place my *frum*, sexually abusive brother belonged, not me. I sat in the back. I came late to avoid the part of our service where people wrapped their *tallesim* [prayer shawls] around family and friends to bless one another. Gradually I moved up and closer. I came in time for the community blessing. To my surprise, there was always someone to share a *tallis* with me. The strangeness wore off, and I felt warmed. I purchased my own *tallis*. I wrapped my warmth around those near me. I belonged.

This experience was a salve on the wound of having been ripped from my roots. It provided a basis for speaking out in the Jewish community. I believed that within the silence of the community there were others who, like those in my shul, would be respectful and supportive, would be stirred to confront the problem, or would be touched by my experience and know that they were not alone as survivors.

I decided to launch my book, *Ordinary Wonders*, through a forum on healing from abuse. A panel of seven women, including myself, discussed recovery. By holding the forum in the heart of the community, we gave substance to the issue of abuse in Jewish homes, to the right of survivors to speak out, and to the need to address the problem within mainstream communities.

Speaking out against incest, I am following, ironically, in my mother's footsteps. For years she has publicly spoken about her experiences during the Holocaust. Like my mother, I am subject to misunderstanding, stigma and pity: What did you do, why didn't you fight back, how could you allow it? Like her, I am also subject to ennoblement, people's awe at another's suffering that ends up distancing me as much as the pity. From my own and my mother's points of view, we feel neither degraded nor elevated by our suffering. We are simply people who have been in difficult situations. Out of our experiences we create something positive to give meaning to the suffering.

The difference between our efforts is that my mother has the support of a community that loves to talk about the Holocaust. This community does not, however, love to talk about sexual abuse.

For much of my life, I felt overwhelmed by the Holocaust. My troubles seemed insignificant in comparison; my parents' experience more real than my own; my protection of them more important. Similarly, the Jewish community focuses on remembering the Holocaust and preventing future Holocausts, to the exclusion of dealing with current, internal problems. It is understandable. The Holocaust is an event of such immense, tragic proportions, it is hard to grapple with it and have any energy left over. However, it is also easier to commemorate the past than to change the present.

The painful reality is that we are not any better than the *goyim* [non-Jews]. It is a hard truth, and I am concerned that readers will point to me and say, "Well, perhaps abuse happens in families of Holocaust survivors, but not to *us*," just as the Berliner Jews said that Polish Jews might be put in concentration camps, but not them. Jews always want to look impeccable in the erroneous belief that if we're just good enough, we won't be attacked, much as the abused child believes that if she pleases the perpetrator, she can avert the violation. Our pose of moral superiority will not stop anti-Semitism; our denial of sexual abuse within our community perpetuates the damage.

For incest survivors, who often have limited, if any, connection with their families of origin, community can provide a crucial foundation of support and nurturing. Instead of denying the existence of abuse in the community, thus further isolating victims, we can broaden our value of family life by making the community an extended family which includes those who have lost their nuclear ones.

As Jews, we have a history of endurance, flexibility and ethics that can inspire and direct us in dealing with abuse in the Jewish community on several levels. First, we must become informed about the issue. Next, we can listen, believe, and understand the one in five of our friends, relatives, neighbors and co-workers who have been abused — giving them our personal support. We can then mobilize

Jewish organizations to educate the community, and support community resources for survivors of sexual and physical abuse. We can also lobby community leaders to deal with the problem in a Jewish context. We can encourage survivors to share their experiences, making if safer for those who have left the community to return to it. We can recognize that survivors are not fundamentally different, neither damaged goods nor saints, but people who have endured great difficulties, transformed like clay pots fired in the kiln.

There is a strength and knowledge that comes with survivorship. From my parents' experience, I learned to persevere, to talk to a God who obviously wasn't in the rescuing business but could give me the strength to go on as my parents had, believing that no matter how bad things are, a time comes to reclaim life from ashes, to rebuild.

Wherever a person is cut off from the community by a wall of silence, the community is broken. By dealing with abuse, we not only reclaim the lives of individuals, we reclaim the community.

Lilian Green is the author of the newly published book *Ordinary Wonders: Living Recovery from Sexual Abuse* [Women's Press, Suite 233, 517 College Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6G 4A2]. She is currently working on a novel.

MY DIARY

January 22, 1987

If I am not a receptacle for the wishes of the dead and not a receptacle for my brother's sex, then what am I?

October 2

In the mirror I see my past: my mother's cheeks, my grandmother's nose, my father's jaw, and all the others I never knew who left a piece of themselves in me, the ones who died in the War. When I look into my eyes, I see a photograph of my father's sisters sitting on a park bench winding wool, their eyes so much like mine: the one who could have been an artist, the one who gave my father her fountain pen for his bar mitzvah. I know so little, just scraps of my father's memories. My mother remembers nothing before the War. So there we are, my face made up of scraps and missing pieces.

I'm terrified that Gran will jump out of the mirror, shattering the pieces of me, and that I will be like her when she was abusing me: bitter, angry, powerful, hurting little helpless things. Gran is my blood, too. It hurts me to think of that. It hurts because the nameless monster who abused me was my own grandmother. I can almost see the shards of glass flying from the mirror, and what will I find then — my grandmother, or who I really am?

I want to look in the mirror and see myself, the past within me, my past, my family past, my historical past, and beyond that my own specialness that's just me.

November 15, 1988

My Brother's Secret

My parents own a secret.
This little business of incest,
we talked with your brother
well, it's a matter of perspective,
you weren't abused
Your brother is religious, has a wife,
three children, is a doctor.

What am I?
The possessor of fractured memories
pictures without sensation,
feelings without incident.
I remember touching and being touched
dread, curiosity, nausea, vomit, arousal,
and recognize the secret I wear like a second skin.

The secret is
my brother shakes with zeal at prayers
as once he shook abusing me;
my brother's smug piety once promised fun
while I smiled uncertainly at his bare skin
white as death engulfing me
until I found myself kneeling at the toilet
wondering at the strangeness of the colors
in my vomit.

The secret is
my brother tucked me into his bed with a book of legends
when I scared myself reading *Jane Eyre*
no child at eleven
staring at his back while he studied,
signalled his desire with one, two fingers,
the odds/evens game to choose who's it,
always it, cold, scared,
glad to be chosen, wishing I weren't
because it makes me sick
but it's something I share with my brother.

The secret is
my brother was good, grown-up, smart.
What was I with this churning inside.
What was I when unpleasant tickles
turned to pleasure turned to pain
when I found myself
throwing up memory, head spinning
dizzy when I lay in bed —
dizzy feels better.
My brother makes me choose,
will I touch him first will he touch me.
I love my brother
he is good.
In dizzy confusion between horrors.
I ask "why am I me,"
he answers,
"you are a speck of dust in the universe."

The secret is
he is wrong.
I am an incest survivor
survived betrayal
survived violation
survived demotion
from female child to speck of dust.

The secret is
my brother, whom I loved so much,
raped me with assorted parts of his
anatomy,
and abandoned me.
He *davens* in a *shtible*.
My father reveres his piety.
My mother honors his position.
And I
sicken with the memory
of his shaking at his prayers
so much like his shaking against my skin.
I ache
with the betrayal of my love
touch the lies that paint my skin ugly,
raw wounds beneath.

November 29

In group therapy, Anna had me sit in one chair and be the part of me that holds back, that is afraid the pain will kill me. In the other chair, I spoke as the part of me that pushes forward. I've never heard it speak so distinctly. I saw it as the old woman in my dreams, an older wiser part of me. I was surprised at what I said and felt, sitting in that chair. I was sad, as if I had already felt this pain. Even so, I knew I had to go on or the growing part of me would die.

I picture the old woman walking with me, hand on my back, giving me her strength and love. She says I will not die of the pain. I ache for the world I've lost. I want it back. She promises a new world. She says I have to choose between my family and myself.

I stand inside myself and look back at Mum gathering light, blessing *Shabbas* candles. In two days it is Hanukkah. Dad sings *Maoz Tzur*, Rock of Ages. They sit with my sister's and brother's families, eating *latkes*, playing *dreidl*. And I am here, on my own.

Somehow, I will find a way to celebrate without them.

[excerpted from *Ordinary Wonders: Living Recovery from Sexual Abuse.*]

(continued from page 20)

"Perhaps," "if," "maybe," all suggest a hypothesis beyond pain. I do not know, cannot know, if my world would have been any different. Somehow, still, it remains easier for me to deflect, to blame the patriarchy, to blame the Holocaust, than to look at my father squarely and name him as the rapist that he is.

Ironically, I am aware that the survival skills of my parents, passed on to me, are what kept me alive during the many years of abuse—I have a keen sense of timing, an ability to perceive danger and, often, to avoid it. As a child I maintained a certain detachment that allowed me to move about neutrally in the midst of the macabre, and to display almost no emotion.

When I am asked about the longterm effects of my early experiences, I reply sardonically that neither the incest, nor the Holocaust, were "early experiences" per se—rather, they are for me a way of life, their effects continually resonating within me.

I often have flashbacks of specific childhood moments. When I'm having sex, I remember scenes from early rapes; I have many nightmares; as I simply go about life, reading, shopping, eating, I frequently have momentary auditory or visual memories. I cringe at the sight of uniforms, at the sound of police sirens. To this day I am always early for meetings, wanting to check things out, make sure that I will not be in danger once a large group of people gather.

I check obsessively behind the doors and in the cupboards in my apartment, expecting some evil person to jump at me out of the dark. My hands at my sides are generally shaped into fists, perhaps to protect, perhaps to continually drain off a bit of the intense fury I feel at perpetrators of abuse. I physically sense the barbed wire limits of my childhood. Trapped also by the unseen ghosts of an earlier generation, I actually inhabit, at times, the painful past that rightfully is my parents', not mine.

Analyzing the parallels of incest and Holocaust survivorship, I recognize how my father and I are mirrored reflections of one another. Because my father survived genocide, he feels incredibly guilty. What was it about him that caused him to live, while his relations perished? Similarly, whenever I think of my sisters still living at home, I shudder and feel burdened by an enormous weight. How did I manage to escape the prison that holds them still? Why have I not tried harder to rescue them?

My father and I also share a sense that danger is imminent, that it's not safe to give oneself up fully to the present. Vigilance is ever with us. He regularly places slices of pumpernickle bread into the pockets of all his jackets, because, he says, "You never know when they'll come to get you!" For my part, the very fact that my father lives is a threat to me. Even if I choose never again to attend a family get-together, still, knowing that my father is alive and well means fundamentally that I am never at peace, always at risk.

Another similarity between my father's experience and my own is that we both lacked models of resistance. My father did not know, nor did I until recently, that Jews fought back in the ghettos and concentration camps. Our heroic past was erased; we were portrayed only as victims. As an incest survivor, I too knew nothing of valiant girls or women who fought back, who killed their violators.

Finally, both Holocaust and incest survivors cope with "revisionists"—those who deny that our experience was real. Neo-Nazis insist that the Holocaust is a hoax. My mother tells me that my sexual abuse is in my imagination. These two Hells are so horrific that not only oppressors and oppressed, but sometimes observers as well obliterate all memories.

Betrayal is another Holocaust/incest similarity. Holocaust survivors often talk of being betrayed by other Jews. Incest, of course, is frequently a betrayal of the most intimate human relationship, of parent to child. If those responsible for our well-being choose to harm us instead, then to whom should we turn for emotional support? If not to our own mothers and fathers, then to whom?

So, you see, because of the traumatic events that both my father and I lived through, our psychological patterning is eerily similar. We forget; we deny; we remember; we relive, and then, we forget again. And, of course, it was easy for me to "forget" on a daily basis, because no one at school, or at synagogue, not even social workers, really wanted to hear about incest. Though I desperately sent out distress signals, I was told, over and over, in ways both covert and overt: "This doesn't happen in Jewish families."

There was no one who would listen to the secrets of my soul. On my own, with no sympathetic other, I could do no better than "forget." By the time I was an adult and had retrieved memories of the perversities I'd endured, I could not bring myself to describe these horrors to anyone. Even in an incest survivors' group, I deliberately withheld details of my childhood traumas. It was too painful to be the "worst case," to receive the pity of those only slightly less abused than myself.

Recently I joined a group of daughters of Holocaust survivors, and, to my surprise, I encountered a number of women who were raped by their fathers in contexts very similar to mine. Together we examine and re-examine; we journey towards our deeper selves in great trepidation. Because of the support I feel from these women, I am slowly discovering the power of speaking out, of writing about my experience. I still often feel awash in my own shame when I articulate my pain. I still feel guilt-ridden, immersed in the suffering of an earlier era, but—even as I write this—I move towards recognizing that the agony that my parents endured does not negate my own agony. As a second generation survivor, I struggle daily to live beyond the horrors of other times, other places. Slowly I unearth the last remaining images of war.

And weekly I light the Sabbath candles and recite the ancient words, continuing to bless whatever that spirit is that keeps me moving, feeling, existing, alive.

The author of this article was born Chava [Eve], but she changed her name to Lilith in 1975 at the age of 17. Art is by Sandi Carter from an exhibit of paintings by incest survivors.

HOTLINES

1-800-4 A CHILD
The nation's largest child abuse hotline has crisis counselors for both children and adults who think that they may have been/are being abused. Provides information and referrals for every county in the U.S., 24 hours.

Bay Area Women Against Rape
(510) 845-RAPE
This 24-hour hot-line offers both immediate support and referrals.

Parents Anonymous
520 S. Lafayette Park Pl. Suite 316, Los Angeles, CA 90045 1-800-421-0353
A self-help program for parents under stress and for abused children.

NEWSLETTERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The Healing Woman
P.O. Box 3038, Moss Beach, CA 94038, (415) 728-0339. *A national newsletter with articles, reviews and resource listings.*

Jewish Adult Survivors of Childhood Abuse Newsletter
P.O. Box 15242, Fremont CA 94539, *A newsletter focusing on issues specific to Jewish survivors.*

Jewish Survivor's Network
P.O. Box 1566, Philadelphia PA 19105. *Monthly newsletter.*

V.O.I.C.E.S. in Action Inc.
(Victims of Incest Can Emerge Survivors), P.O. Box 1488309, Chicago IL 60614, 1-800-768-4238 *An international non-profit organization which provides referrals and resource information, educates the public about incest, hosts conferences and has a group including Jewish survivors.*

SAVING REMNANTS: FEELING JEWISH IN AMERICA *by Sara Bershtel and Allen Graubard. (Free Press, 1992, $24.95.)*

I've read several books over the last few years that alleged to be about the Jewish-American experience, and at the end of each one I would stop and think, but where am I in this book? Where are all the people *I* know?

This exceptional text is the opposite. It is so resonantly true to life, so ringingly authentic that I felt almost a *frisson* of suspicion — have I and everyone I know been secretly followed by these authors for years?

The interviewees in the book are all familiar: the man who received at age 13 not a bar mitzvah but a dog; the conflicted Harvard graduate whose "closest girlfriends are all half-Jewish"; the thoroughly assimilated filmmaker who confides that he has learned to use a rifle in preparation for another Holocaust; the Vietnam antiwar activist whose Jewish identity is the result of her exposure to some shocking anti-Semitism on the Left; the gay social worker whose mission included frequenting political, social and theater groups and gay churches in order to see where his gay clients might find supportive communities for themselves, but whose avoidance of the gay synagogue makes him confront, finally, his "strong, confused Jewish feelings"' the secular feminist who ends up as a board member in an Orthodox shul; the founding member of S.D.S. who hands her child, during the latter's backyard bar mitzvah, not the Torah's five books, but five other great works, including a Benny Goodman record, Sholom Aleichem in translation, and Tom Hayden's master's thesis.

Chapters documenting us by typology ("The Jewish Radical," "Assimilation, the American Way," "Anti-Semitism, the Ultimate Tie," "The Resilience of Orthodoxy," "The New Spirituality," "Life in the Mainstream," and "Liberations, Jewish Style") present, for the first time in my awareness, a truly non-provincial portrait of American Judaism. One of the authors' main theses is that most Jews in America are now *post*-assimilated — meaning that we are no longer moving from a particularistic Jewish world into a less differentiated one, but that we are, right off the bat, *born* into an open modern identity. Jews in America, then, posit the authors, are "a people not 'chosen' but choosing. This is true for the least affiliated as well as the most observant. And it is at the heart of both individual experiences and the apparently contradictory patterns of revival

SIBLINGS UNLIMITED

Francine Klagsbrun's **MIXED FEELINGS: LOVE, HATE, RIVALRY, AND RECONCILIATION AMONG BROTHERS AND SISTERS** (Bantam, 1992, $22.50), is not a subway rider's book. I found it nearly impossible to concentrate at work after a morning commute's worth of insights into sibling relationships. Not content merely to analyze my own family structure — as the oldest of four I certainly have enough material to work with — I began asking my colleagues at work about the birth order in their own families.

In Klagsbrun's anecdotes I found strangers expressing feelings remarkably similar to some of my own; I took to xeroxing particularly meaningful passages to discuss with a co-worker, give to my mother, or stash away for myself. Here is an excerpt from this thought-provoking and fascinating work:

Scene: The living room of a cozy apartment in Portland, Oregon. A woman, in her mid-forties, is visiting her older sister. Both look serious, intense. They have been in strong disagreement for many months about the younger women's religious plans. Reared as Roman Catholics, they both remained devoted to the church for years. But some time ago, the younger woman had met and married a Jewish man. Although never asked by her husband to give up her religion, she had become increasingly interested in the idea of converting.

She had discussed her thoughts with her older sister, who had adamantly disapproved. Their parents, both dead, would have seen such an act as a betrayal of their faith, the sister argued. Conversion would set the woman apart from everyone in the family, including the sister. Why couldn't the woman celebrate her husband's holidays with him and their own holidays with the family, without going such a formal break?

The younger woman had tried to explain her own thoughts, sick at heart at her sister's unhappiness but clear about her feelings. Then they had stopped discussing the subject, each feeling she had made her point.

Now, visiting her older sister, the younger says, "Well, it's over."

The older, recognizing the "it" to mean the religious issue and taking the "over" to mean her sister has dropped the idea of converesion, says joyfully, "Oh, I'm so glad you've put that behind you, and we can just go on as before."

"You don't understand," the younger says, her voice trembling. "It's over. I've done it. The conversion is complete."

"Oh," the older cries. Her eyes brim with tears as she excuses herself and leaves the room. A few minutes later she returns, smiling, her face composed and two glasses of champagne in her hands.

"Mazel tov," she says, using the traditional Jewish greeting for good luck. "It's not what I wanted, but now that it's done, I wish you only the best. We're still sisters, and that's all that matters."

—Karen Prager

and asimilation that they generate. Identity, formerly objective and imposed, has become constructed and chosen." Parts of the book, indeed, confront the reader with how bad and fragile it can really feel to have such bottomless reedoms.

This smart, straight-talking, brutally unsentimental book gets an A+. Having the klieg lights shine so mercilessly on you while you read can hurt your eyes a little — but it also clears your head.

— Susan Schnur

THEY CALLED HER REBBE: THE MAIDEN OF LUDOMIR *by Gershon Winkler (Judaica Press, 1991, $16.95 / $12.95).*

In this, his seventh book, Gershon Winkler paints an admiring feminist portrait of Chana Rochel Werbermacher (1815-1892), the female Chassidic *rebbe*, and a sympathetic picture of the milieu in which she lived.

First we meet Werbermacher's parents: a long-childless couple bewildered by the birth of a different, self-motivated female child, who, despite loving parental discouragement, develops into a brilliant young scholar. As a betrothed young woman she struggles with the anticipated constraints of marriage and makes difficult choices, maturing into a compassionate healer, counselor and spiritualist. As an accomplished *rebbe*, always strictly observant of Jewish law, she responds creatively and bravely when she is threatened with excommunication by the rabbinic authorities of her time because she offers too dangerous a role model for young women. It is ironic and sad that one hundred years after her death, Winkler's story of her life is banned from some Jewish bookstores because of the same fear.

Werbermacher was not the daughter, sister or wife of a rabbi, a relationship that sometimes gained a woman special religious and study privileges. Her unique place in Jewish women's history is highlighted by her having been so alone and so independent in her achievements and struggles. Winkler's version of her life is an easy-to-read, entertaining treatment, taking the reader on a somber yet soul-refreshing journey to another time and place.

— Naomi Danis

THE WOMEN ARE MARCHING: THE SECOND SEX AND THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION *by Philippa Strum (Lawrence Hill Books, 1992, $29/$16.95).*

When the Intifada began in December 1987, its leadership eagerly strategized ways to "shake off" all things Israeli: political and economic control, ideas and culture. Their plans were wide-ranging and included strike days against Israeli employers, rock-throwing at hated settlers and soldiers, and the establishment of small businesses to reduce reliance on Israeli goods.

What the leadership failed to plan for, however, was women's ready participation in the struggle. This failure, say Palestinian feminists, is sure to have long-term consequences, for whether or not the Palestinians win their fight for an autonomous state, daily life in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has been irrevocably changed by women's participation in public life.

While most women got involved in the Intifada out of nationalist fervor, female activists soon discovered that issues of gender equity were an important component of shaking off the old and building the new. And, while the four largest Palestinian women's organizations are tied to groups such as the Communist Party, the Democratic Front for Liberation of Palestine, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—groups that historically have given women short shrift—other independent groups have formed and have reached scores of previously uninvolved women.

Philippa Strum, an American Jewish civil-rights activist and professor of political science, has documented the burgeoning feminist movements that have sprung up on the West Bank. The result, *The Women Are Marching*, combines journal entries with well-researched, probing interviews and commentary on the changes wrought by the five-year-old Palestinian insurrection.

Intent on arguing her case for a two-state solution, Strum relies on an eye for detail and on language meant to compel the reader to truly feel life under Israeli rule. She also focuses on growing Islamic fundamentalist movements, and never misses a beat in condemning the misogyny endemic to this strain of political thought. Although I wish Strum had also addressed the impact of feminism on the sexuality of Palestinian women, the book is nonetheless essential reading for anyone interested in Third World feminism, the Middle East, or any current struggles for self-determination. *—Eleanor Bader*

KEEPERS OF THE HISTORY: WOMEN AND THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT *by Elise G. Young (Teacher's College Press, Columbia University, 1992, $38 /$17.95).*

Unlike Philippa Strum [above], who sees tremendous changes in Palestinian society as a result of women's participation in the Intifada, radical feminist Elise Young is far less sanguine.

She eschews nationalism and looks forward to a day when both peoples "transcend the boundaries of nation-state patriarchalism." And while the Middle East puts its own cultural spin on patriarchal control, the question, she says, is one of nuance, not substance.

Young offers violence against women as an example. Such violence, she writes, is central to war, central to nationalism. In fact, the Hebrew word for penis is *zayin*, which is also the word for weapon. The phrase for Israel's armed forces can thus translate as "an army equipped with

(continued on page 28)

SACRED SEX?

If you are the sort of feminist who finds the Bible's sexism disturbing, and books about the Goddess attractive, then **IN THE WAKE OF THE GODDESSES: WOMEN, CULTURE, AND THE BIBLICAL TRANSFORMATION OF PAGAN MYTH** by Tikva Frymer-Kensky *(The Free Press, 1992)* is an important work to read. In this excerpt Frymer-Kensky dispels myths about sacred sex:

The lack of emphasis on eros in biblical thought creates a vacuum that has been filled by some modern biblical scholars, who describe a "sex cult" that the people practiced in Hosea's time. According to these scholars, Israel knew a "sexual orgiasticism," which included sacred prostitutes, festive orgies, and a peculiar initiation rite in which every young girl offered herself to the divinity by having sex with a stranger inside the holy area, in return for which she expected fertility . . . .

The whole idea of a sex cult — in Israel or in Canaan — is a chimera, the product of ancient and modern sexual fantasies. Ever since the beginnings of modern biblical scholarship, it has been assumed that Semitic religion was very sexy, that the temples "thronged with sacred prostitutes," and that there was a widespread worship of a great mother-goddess in which sexual union at the sanctuary ensured fruitfulness. No real evidence for this has been unearthed, but most contemporary scholars simply assume the existence of sexual licentiousness, referring in footnotes to each other.

—Susan Schnur

A SUDDEN SPATE OF WOMEN'S HOLOCAUST MEMOIRS

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Reviewed by Diane Cole

SMOKE OVER BIRKENAU *by Liana Millu, translated by Lynne Sharon Schwartz (Jewish Publication Society, 1992, $19.95).*
I REMEMBER NOTHING MORE: THE WARSAW CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL AND THE JEWISH RESISTANCE *by Anna Blady Szwajger, translated by Tasja Darowska and Danusia Stok (Simon and Schuster, 1992, $10.00).*
WHY MY FATHER DIED: A DAUGHTER CONFRONTS HER FAMILY'S PAST AT THE TRIAL OF KLAUS BARBIE *by Annette Kahn, translated by Anna Cancogni (Summit Books/Simon and Schuster, 1992, $19.95).*

The pull of memory cannot be pushed aside forever. Thus it is that half a century after Auschwitz, Treblinka, Birkenau, Bergen-Belsen and the other death camps, there is suddenly a storm of memoirs by women survivors. Why now and not earlier? It seems that after the war only the repression of memory allowed many of these survivors to create new lives in joy (the will to forget can be as strong as the need to remember). Fifty years later, memory is demanding its due.

All of the many newly published memoirs (see sidebar) speak with a special power, but each of the three reviewed here represents a different aspect of life during the Holocaust and dramatizes the ways in which women's experiences differed from men's.

On one level, the difference is emotional. As mothers or would-be mothers, these women mourn their forfeited children, both real and longed for, as lost connections to future generations and, ultimately, to the possibility of any future at all. Each book discusses this loss from a slightly different perspective, and each leaves us with a different sense of personal heroism amid catastrophic anguish. Liana Millu dramatizes the plight of pregnant women doomed simultaneously to give birth and to watch their children begin to die, and Anna Blady Swajger speaks as a pediatrician who comes to feel, at the Warsaw Ghetto's bleakest moment, that life itself is no longer a gift worth giving to any child. As a child of a Resistance fighter who died in the Holocaust, Annette Kahn mourns that she was never a daughter.

In his introduction to Liana Millu's *Smoke Over Birkenau*, Primo Levi points to other specifically female Holocaust experiences: "For a variety of reasons, the women's situation [at Birkenau] was a good deal worse than that of the men: first, less physical endurance, coupled with work more arduous and degrading than the labors imposed on the men; the agonies of disrupted families; and above all the haunting presence of the crematoria, located right in the middle of the women's camp, inescapable, undeniable, their ungodly smoke rising from the chimneys to contaminate every day and every night, every moment of respite or illusion, every dream and timorous hope."

Anna Blady Szwajger, who served as a physician in the Warsaw Ghetto, explains the belatedness of her memoirs at the very beginning of her book, *I Remember Nothing More: The Warsaw Children's Hospital and the Jewish Resistance* : "I have myself to blame that only now am I writing when so many years have passed and so many things have faded from my memory," she explains in a tone both apologetic and defensive. "But immediately after the war I decided not to write anymore. Never. What had happened wasn't something to be written about, or read; at least, that's what I thought. And to write about other, everyday, pre-war matters didn't make sense. So—better nothing. And maybe I thought—had a faint hope—that if I remained silent, I'd manage to forget at least some of it and be able to live like everybody else."

But, finding herself old and ill, Szwajger was forced to confront memory at last: "There, on a hospital bed, I started to write. Quickly. To win the race against

Liana Millu

"They will all live again."

Why is Holocaust survivor and journalist Liana Millu, often called "the female Primo Levi," so unknown to Jewish readers today? Her stunning book, *Smoke Over Birkenau*, which documents the lives—and deaths—of women, almost immediately went out of print after it was published in Italian in 1947. It had a brief second life in 1957, but was then silenced again until last year. "I suffered terribly," says Millu of the book's initial disappearance, "and gave up writing for ten years."

When the book was published in English, the author's "mission was accomplished," says Lynne Sharon Schwartz, whose English rendering of *Smoke Over Birkenau* has won two prestigious translation awards. "It was a kind of redemption."

Following are (translated) excerpts from letters Millu wrote to Schwartz:

I thank you not only for me, but also for those women who will have a new life in another language. . . . This is all I could have wished for from my translator—that is, the person who becomes the second mother of the book.

[From a letter dated October 1] *What a pleasure to begin the month with the joy of such longed-for news, and so long awaited that I had begun to doubt that it would ever come. "It will take so long," I used to think, "that I won't be around anymore." However, I'm still here, and the translation of* Smoke Over Birkenau *is here. It is a joy, yes, but a tranquil one, and tinged with sadness for all the women in* Smoke Over Birkenau *who became smoke and were scattered in that hostile sky. They will live again through your deeply felt work. They will live even in the United States. I dwell often on this prospect, and feel it with my whole heart.*

Thank you for having made these feelings possible. Thank you for something which I no longer dared to hope for. Thank you from me. But also from Lili, Maria, Gustine and Lotti, Bruna and Pinin, Lise, and Zinuchka. They are near you, and they say thank you.

WOMEN REMEMBER THE HOLOCAUST

Other New Titles

BORISKA'S PROPHECY: A TRUE STORY OF SURVIVAL AND RENEWAL *by Alice Dunn Adler (Acropolis Books, 1992, $19.95).*

FINAL LETTERS FROM VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST *selected by Reuven Dafni and Yehudit Kleiman (Paragon House, 1992, $15.95).*

ESCAPE THROUGH THE PYRENEES *by Lisa Fittko, translated by David Koblic (Northwestern University Press, 1992, $12.95)*

SEED OF SARAH: MEMOIRS OF A SURVIVOR *by Judith Magyar Isaacson (University of Illinois Press, 1992, $19.95).*

TO TELL THE STORY: POEMS OF THE HOLOCAUST *by Yala Korwin (Holocaust Library, 1992, $8.95).*

THE LAST SELECTION: A CHILD'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE HOLOCAUST *by Goldie Szachter Kalib, with Sylvan Kalib and Ken Wachsberger (University of Massachusetts Press, 1992, $29.95).*

WITNESSES: LIFE IN OCCUPIED KRAKOW *by Miriam Marianska-Peleg and Mordecai Peleg (Routledge, Chapman, & Hall, 1992, $25).*

LETTERS FROM PRAGUE: 1939-1941 *compiled by Raya Czerner Schapiro and Helga Czerner Weinberg (Academy Chicago Publishers, 1992, $20).*

MUTED VOICES: JEWISH SURVIVORS OF LATVIA REMEMBER. *Collected and edited by Gertrude Schneider (Philosophical Library, 1992, $24.95)*

DRY TEARS: THE STORY OF A LOST CHILDHOOD *by Nechama Tec (Oxford University Press, 1992, $8.95).*

A DAUGHTER'S GIFT OF LOVE: A HOLOCAUST MEMOIR *by Trudi Birger, written with Jeffrey M. Green (Jewish Publication Society, 1992, $22.95). $19.95).*

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time."And so, in a style that more often than not resembles shorthand notes, Szwajger recounts an earlier race against time, when she was a young medical student and doctor-in-training in Nazi-occupied Poland. Just twenty-two, Szwajger responded to each new assault against the Jews by committing herself ever more strongly to her goals as a physician—to heal the sick, the wounded, and the helpless, of whom there were always an increasing number in the Warsaw ghetto where she lived.

Most of all, Szwajger devoted herself to children because, she writes, "Even though times were bad, as bad as could be, we still wouldn't accept that it was of no use and thought that if we pulled through, we'd save those children and they would survive till the end." Short-staffed and depleted of supplies, the makeshift wards of the Children's Hospital where she worked were grim indeed: "On the banks lay skeletons of children or swollen lumps. . . Only their eyes were alive. Until you've seen such eyes, the face of a starving child with its gaping black hole for a mouth and its wrinkled, parchment-like skin, you don't know what life can be like."

She pressed on despite the increasingly painful recognition that those children whom death did not catch in the Ghetto would be rounded up for deportation to the death camps all the same. On the hospital's last day, as the Nazis began transporting the last patients to the cattle cars, Szwajger could no longer bear the thought of the greater suffering that lay ahead for her young patients. In an agonizing decision that continues to haunt her, Szwajger and her colleagues "saved" the remaining children, administering lethal doses of morphine to provide them with at least one final dignity—a peaceful death.

With no time to mourn, only to act, Szwajger quickly joined the Jewish underground and helped organize an illegal hospital. When the Gestapo closed that as well, she found other ways to provide medical care. Sometimes that meant performing illegal abortion, even on herself. "Who knew better than I that children had no right to be born?. . . It seemed to me, and it still seems to me, that anything is better than the loss of a child, a living child." At one point Szwajger attempted suicide, but even today refrains from remembering that in too much detail.

After forty years of "normal" pediatric practice in post-war Poland, Szwajger writes, "Somewhere underneath I thought that I had no right to carry out my profession. After all, one does not start one's work as a doctor by leading people not to life but to death." Her final, agonized cry may be that of every survivor: "Maybe it was too heavy a burden for the rest of my life." For myself, reading the gritty details, I seek a stronger word than heroine to describe Szwajger.

The case of Liana Millu's *Smoke Over Birkenau* presents a slightly different confrontation with memory. Written over forty years ago and apprently well known in Italy, it has taken this long to find an American publisher. Perhaps the need to repress the knowledge of evil can be as strong among readers as among survivors themselves. In *Smoke Over Birkenau* , Liana Millu takes us into the dark interior of the camps themselves, where the dilemmas are grimly similar to Szwajger's.

A Jewish Italian journalist who turned partisan fighter after the onset of Mussolini's racial laws, Millu was captured and sent to Birkenau an 1944 at the age of twenty-four. "Today I realize that I owe my salvation to the fact that I already considered myself as good as dead," she writes. "I was resigned, and that allowed me to do the unthinkable, such as look around, seek out a blade of grass amid the mud, marvel at the colors of the dawn." That sense of resignation, combined with Millu's acute powers of observation, yields an extraordinary account.

Each chapter recounts the story of a

momentary friend or confidante amid the unremitting labor and gruesome inhumanity of the surrounding death camp. As Millu listens to each of these women unburden her soul, both teller and listener begin to see a fleeting glimpse of hope, another small reason to live — reasons that are particular to these individual women but become, in Millu's vision, universal to all women.

When Maria, already seven months pregnant, reveals her determination to give birth to her child, no matter what the cost, Millu reflects, "Of course she wanted to give birth, it was an irresistible law of nature—but were the laws of nature still valid in a death camp? She refused to sacrifice her right to be a mother. . . but why give birth to a creature who was doomed to feed the flames?" Ultimately, inevitably, both mother and child do feed those flames, but not without first providing the other women in the camp with a glimmer of hope, even the possibility of joy, amid the despair.

The bonds of motherhood become the intertwined threads of life and death for other inmates as well. Bruna, whose thirteen-year-old son Pinin is also an inmate at Birkenau, starves herself in order to "organize" warm clothing and smuggle extra food rations to her son. Self-deprivation gives her reason to live; when she learns that Pinin has been "selected" for the ovens, she loses the last remaining reason for her survival. She uses her remaining energy to achieve one final goal — to hold her beloved son in a tight, suicidal embrace across the camp's electrified fence, "the mother resting her head on the son's, as if to watch over his sleep."

In simple, straightforwardly lyrical language, Millu dramatizes a nightmare world where euthanasia, suicide, and survival are more than philosophical questions; they are the stuff of everyday life. Thus, Millu also shows how the quest for survival could turn otherwise chaste women into whores. Eighteen-year-old Lotti justifies her decision to join the camp's prostitute *kommando* this way: "I refused to be consumed and vanish like a cloud. . . I can feel how disgustingly wrong it is that I should have to die because I couldn't steal soup or I had no cigarettes to trade for bread, while other people who weren't as good as me, who might have committed crimes or led wicked lives, would somehow manage to survive." But one woman's rationale is another's shame, and Lotti's upright older sister Gustine uses her dying breath to condemn her sister, to whom she once clung for life, as worse than dead — degraded.

"Stairway" (Auschwitz) *(detail)*. Painting by Sherry Sanabria.

In these and other stories, Millu does not flinch from describing what she saw, nor does she attempt to judge: One young widow seeks redemption by giving up her own life to help a man who resembles her dead husband to escape. Another woman, uncertain of her husband's fate, finally concludes that adultery is a small price to pay for survival.

Each woman searches for the "right" answer. But in the death world of the camps, *could* there have been an ethical, "right" choice for any of these women? Millu's vision is objective, but it is not cold. She shows us how, victimized and traumatized, she and the inmates who worked, lived and died beside her did what they could. By refusing either to condemn or to glorify, she allows us to understand, to identify, and finally to look within ourselves—for answers that are not there.

In a somewhat different vein, Annette Kahn acts as both personal witness and historian in her masterful retelling of her family's ordeal, *Why My Father Died: A Daughter Confronts Her Family's Past at the Trial of Klaus Barbie* .

Kahn, a French legal journalist, had few memories of her father, who had left home to fight for the Resistance before she turned three and, soon after, was captured by the Gestapo, tortured, then murdered in a group massacre ordered by Klaus Barbie, "the Butcher of Lyon."

The details—known only in outline—had seemed unreal to her. And perhaps not knowing more had become a way of keeping the few memories she did possess secretly alive within her. Then Barbie was extradited to France for trial in 1987, and Kahn found herself suddenly embarking upon a dual journey, covering the daily events of the Barbie trial for her job and at the same time uncovering, for her own sake, the full story of her father.

Kahn deftly intercuts past and present, shifting between the courtroom drama of Barbie's trial and the more personal tragedy of her father's death. Each story by itself would have been enough. But by placing the particular anguish of one family against the larger landscape of Barbie's reign of terror, she presents a devastating perspective.

"I have come out of the Barbie trial a different person," she concludes. "Thanks to the trial, and to this book, I have finally gotten to know my father. I have taken the faint memory of a man, a mere fistful of dust, and lent him substance."

In this way, she has attempted both to heal herself and to forge a newly found connection between the generations lost to the Holocaust and those that continue to live and will continue after her. Thus, finally, her document, like Millu's and Szwajger's and all the others, becomes part of our communal memory—a testimony that, once born, we cannot allow to die. For as each of these heroines of the Holocaust attests, memory itself is life.

Diane Cole is the author of After Great Pain: A New Life Emerges.

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penises," and the verb meaning "to take to arms" also means "to have sexual intercourse. . . " The use of penis as weapon is linked to penetration of the earth through modern military and industrial technology."

Keepers of the History is intent on placing the Intifada in a broad context of male control over women (Young names it the domination of land and women), and she provides readers with an incisive history of the region. Her focus on Jews from Arab countries and their roles in creating/opposing Zionism is fascinating, as is her analysis of the creation of ideology around Western versus Eastern social mores.

Still, the book's political outlook seems rigid, paying little attention to the reasons some women opt for nationalism over coalition with other women, or choose women's committees which focus exclusively on nationalist concerns. And, while she mentions class, her analysis is fundamentally class-blind. Nonetheless, *Keepers of the History* is a provocative, woman-centered analysis of a conflict that is rarely viewed in terms of gender politics.

—Eleanor Bader

(continued from page 12)

tor signals that I was very interested in education, and that if he talked about this subject he'd find a receptive audience. But he didn't pay any attention at all to what I was saying. If he had been listening actively, he could have suggested that we contribute to, say, an educational facility in Israel. But there was no real questioning on the man's part."

A Manhattan woman who supports Orthodox institutions of many sorts, especially schools for girls and women, says that "when someone comes over to ask for a contribution and my husband is at home, I always think that the solicitor is very lucky. He gives really without thinking too much about the project itself. I would never give that way." Judy Sloan agrees that many men give impulsively. "My husband," she says, "is a pushover. I have been trying for years to train him to say six words: 'I want to ask my wife.'"

Jewish women exert influence on their husband's Jewish philanthropy that is nowhere either acknowledged or validated and praised in the Jewish community. Women get credit only for the money they give directly in their own names (and sometimes even this credit is denied—the complaint heard most often was that women make a contribution and the thank-you letter is addressed to their husbands!). Men gain *kavod* [honor] in the community for the larger gifts though they are only nominally the givers. "He gives because I tell him to," was a common and almost flat observation by several married women. "I solicit myself at the end of the year," said one woman in UJA-talk. "Then I solicit my husband too. If nobody asked him he wouldn't give. Or he'd give an awful lot less than I know he can."

Gender and power

The IRS shows that 40% of the 3.3 million Americans with gross assets of $500,000 or more are women. Despite this, women's philanthropy has been undervalued—both the process (whereby women influence the contributions of other family members) and the product (how much money women really do give). To examine both aspects, two women in Baltimore commissioned a professional analysis of Jewish women's contributions. Brenda Lipitz, chair of long-range planning for the Council of Jewish Federation's national Women's Division and president of the Women's Division of the Associated Jewish Charities of Baltimore, and Lee Meyerhoff Hendler, chair of its strategic planning committee, assert that women's giving is not "plus giving" but a substantial part of any community campaign. Nicki Newman Tanner reminds us that "Philanthropy is number-driven, so the men *have* to take the results seriously."

Judy Chapman of San Francisco posed this challenge to Brian Lurie, Executive Director of the United Jewish Appeal: "You say Women's Division raises 20% of the UJA annual budget. Would you say women have 20% of the power? 20% of the leadership positions?"

Well, they don't. There are several reasons for this, but also some solutions. One, women aren't asked to give enough, because their financial contributions have been trivialized. Two,women don't always give 50% of their "family gift" in their own names, and they should. Three, women want to support many projects and therefore spread their charity dollars around, a practice which aids many different organizations but which doesn't help women rise to positions on boards where they can have wider influence in putting women's issues on the agenda of co-ed organizations.

Ann Plutzer of the Commission on Synagogue Relations at New York UJA/Federation comments that most women "spread out their money and thus thin out the influence the money entitles them to." But there is a paradox here. If women put all their philanthropy into one "basket"—as men so often do—they gain access to the decision-making processes in the Jewish community, and have an opportunity to infuse male-dominated institutions with women's thinking. Women would have greater influence but at the same time would hurt the smaller, innovative charities which many of them now support, and which spawn the new ideas that later find their way into the mainstream. To maximize the influence of relatively small checks, and encourage projects that do not fall under the umbrella of large organizations, some women are making their contributions via one of the women's funds operating in communities across the country. Some Jewish federations—Minneapolis among them—have started women's funds specifically for Jewish women's projects, an experiment being watched with interest by women in other communities.

The advantage of such women's funds is that they will help foster an ethic of obligation on the part of women to use their gifts to help other women and girls—feminist philanthropy, which will address the specific concerns of those many women who want to support Jewish institutions but only if they themselves support women.

Jewish women's philanthropy presents an extraordinary opportunity to the Jewish community right now, yet the opportunity seems to be going almost unrecognized There has been much concern voiced about how general Jewish giving may be drying up, about how more Jews are more likely to contribute to a non-Jewish than to a Jewish philanthropy, about how Jews are giving more to the arts and to higher education that ever before—and are being courted by high-profile secular nonprofit organizations. Nobody mentions women's "political" giving—whether actually to candidates or—more significant—to causes that represent women's interests. Jewish organizations should be mailing to (or courting the Jewish women donors to) Fund for a Feminist Majority, National Abortion Rights Action League, National Organization for Women, Ms Foundation for Women, and the like. Secular causes are actively mailing to lists of *Jewish* women. Organizations like NARAL, for example, mail their appeals to LILITH' subscribers (about 40% of whom appear on no other Jewish mailing list). National Council of Jewish Women, ORT, Na'amat, B'nai B'rith Women, Hadassah—all the Jewish women's organizations hungry for new members and new donors, and whose support of women's rights deserves wider publicity—should market their organizations as Jewish philanthropies willing to act as powerful advocates for women's issues.

Now that women understand better the connection between writing a check and getting a vote, women themselves have an unprecedented opportunity to change the priorities of the Jewish community via their philanthropy.

(continued on page 38)

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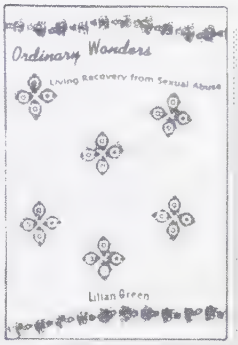

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(continued from page 3)

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Just had to tell you at LILITH how thrilled I was to see your cover story on lesbian weddings in your last issue—it made my day. As a Jewish lesbian medical student, I understand Rosanne's and Judy's difficulty bridging their Jewish and lesbian dimensions, and I am inspired by their courage to come out to and invite their extended families and colleagues to their *Brit-Ahavah* (covenant of love.)

My lover of two years was recently not invited to my high school friends traditional Jewish wedding because my friend didn't want to make a "political statement" (as she put it) at her wedding. She told me she was afraid that we might slow dance together and her relatives would talk.

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I hope the day comes soon when all weddings are occasions to celebrate all kinds of loving relationships. Thanks to LILITH for helping that day come sooner.

DEIDRE TOVAH PEARL
Stanford, CA

I read the letter by Elsie Goldstein about putting an orange on your seder plate because some rabbi said "a woman belongs on the *bimah* like an orange on a seder plate." Zohar Wilbush, Curator Emeritus at the Israel Museum, told me many years ago about preparations in the summer and early Fall for the next year's Passover. One of the special delicacies that everyone looked forward to was fresh oranges on the Passover table. To have this, during the orange growth season, they would set aside the most perfect oranges, dig a huge hole in the ground and put in the oranges covered with layers of fine sand to keep them fresh. The hole was filled to the top and covered with a board.

When Passover approached, the hole would be opened and the oranges removed one at a time and handled with great care and reverence. By and large this method of preservation worked , and Israelis proudly graced their tables with oranges.

I would like to see this Yerushalmi (Jerusalemite) tradition revised. It is not only a nice way to share a non-shtetl memory but the orange belongs on the table just as the woman belongs on the bimah.

ITA ABER
Yonkers, NY

In SPRING 1992, LILITH ran a story by our editor Susan Schnur on Passover rituals including a new ritual-cum-artifact called "Miriam's Cup" ("*Kos Miryam*"). Miriam's Cup is intended to be used at the seder as a bracket to the well-established ceremony of Elijah's cup (the latter, a goblet of wine, offered near the end of the seder; the former, a goblet of spring water, sipped near the beginning). Here Susan updates how the ritual worked in her home:

Besides the regular festive Passover table, we set up, in another room, a low, altar-type table specifically in honor of the prophetess Miriam. Each guest brought a candle, candle holder, and object(s) representing "a personal step towards freedom," and the table soon became a beautiful reliquary of passports, bathing suits, books, field glasses, flowers, running shoes, acupuncturist's business cards, tadpoles, photographs, mourning ribbons, feathers, railroad ties, wedding rings, hats and rocks. After singing "Zol Zein" *and "When I'm On My Journey Don't You Weep After Me," people spoke individually of their gratitude at having been "brought from the narrows into their own personal promising wildernesses," explained their objects and lit their candles.*

It soon became not only a warm, spiritual and beautiful room, but it became clear how both Elijah and Miriam belong at our seders. Passover, with its yearly recurrence, reinforces for us the reality of two kinds of time: the cyclic (Miriamic), as well as the linear (Elijah-like, culminating in a redemptive end-of-time). We revisit the old themes of Passover each year in retrograde homage, but we also greet each new agricultural year by being predictably just plain older. Elijah's stay in the desert was that of the lone, howling visionary; Miriam's life there was one of tireless tribal parenting—she herself was a constant source of nurturance, hope, a spiritual oasis.

The complementarity of Elijah and Miriam surfaced naturally:

ELIJAH	*MIRIAM*
sky	*earth*
history	*nature*
apollonian	*dionysian*
prophetic	*ecstatic*
transcendent	*immanent*
goal	*process*
male	*female*
millenial	*quotidian*
solar	*lunar*

and so on...

Do you have Miriamic improvisations of your own? If so, LILITH would be delighted to hear them.

I am a recent immigrant from the former USSR. I was born in Belorussia in 1909. Ten years later my older brother, Hatskel, who was born in 1899, immigrated to the USA. Can you imagine that I haven't seen or heard from my brother for so many years? When I came to this country I was sure that I would find my brother But all my efforts were unsuccessful.. My last hope is your newspaper. Maybe somebody knows if my brother is still alive, or something about his family.

Our last name phonetically spelled is Mayzel. Spelling of it might be different as

"Maizel", "Maisel ", "Maysel." When my brother immigrated in 1920's from Romanovo village of Belorussia, his first name was "Hatskel." I know that he used to live in New York and in late 1950's he moved to the suburbs. When he lived in New York he used to have a food business. He has a son who is a Doctor, but unfortunately his first name is unknown. I have some pictures from my brother's wedding and his son's Bar Mitzvah.

If somebody knows something about my brother and his family, it would be greatly appreciated if you would inform me about that at my address: 321 Elmora Avenue, #203, Elizabeth, NJ 07208.

ABEL MAYZEL

LILITH is a very important part of my life. I am a Jew and a feminist and finally I am being recognized and spoken to. So understand that this negative letter is written with sadness. In the current issue, in the article on Politics 1992, no mention is made of the only all female, pro-Israel Pac, "Joint Action Committee." In the struggle to have Jewish women take an active dollar-power role in politics your readers should know about the only all volunteer action organization that supports the single issue of Israel: *Joint Action Committee, P.O. Box 105, Highland Park IL 60035, President Ms. Marcia Balonick, 708-433-4774.*

MARSHA LEIFER
North Miami Beach, FL

I would like to suggest to you that you do an article on the dearth of young Jewish women on TV sit-coms. The only one I know of is the illegitimate daughter on "The Powers That Be. " There is no scarcity of young Jewish men, and lo and behold, they are all involved with non-Jewish women. This possibly reflects the fact there there are a great many Jewish sit-com writers on TV, and very likely all married to non-Jewish women.

I think this situation should be exposed and protested. By the way, I am 81.

Am enclosing contribution of $100.

MARY COHART
New Haven, CT

(Please see Nora Mandel's comments in Kol Ishah, page 35.)

In your "From the Editor" [Summer 1992] you write, justifiably so, about the harmful reality of discrimination based on weight and looks. The story told by Jewish women college students was illuminating: how often have we all spent precious time and energy discussing weight, food, diet, etc? However, your conclusion, "To make no more mention of weight, size, physical perfections or imperfections when I greet someone or when I describe her, " is fallacious, though well-meaning. If, as you write, people have "not much more control over their bodies' shape than they do over the color of their eyes," aren't you being pointless in failing to use descriptions like "thin" or "fat," just as you would be absurd if you shied away from "green-eyed" or brown haired"?

What I propose is that we *destigmatize* the word "fat," and return it to its rightful place as an adjective, not a moral thermometer.

If you are averse to any and all adjectives for fear of being racist or weight-obsessed, what of fear of sexism? Is is acceptable to describe a visitor as a *female*, rather than a *male*? If I merely said, "A person came to see me," I am being purposefully vague. So "tall" is permissible but "slender" is not?

By the way, I'm fat. Or chubby? Voluptuous? *Zoftig*? I too look forward to a time where my other attributes—my intelligence, my sense of humor—can be appreciated and/or dismissed, not merely the size of my thighs.

DIANE SALZBERG
Valencia, CA

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1492: Jewish Women on Trial

The article "Burned at the Stake: The Rediscovered Case of Isabel Lopez" (Summer 1992) generated so much interest that LILITH wanted to share with our readers a picture of the scholarly work involved in unearthing this saga of a born Jew who converted to Christianity but was put to death by the Spanish Inquisition.

Renée Levine Melammed, currently a scholar in residence in Judaic Studies at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, PA, conducted the original research for the LILITH story of the 16th-Century Inquisition trial of the Spanish-Jewish woman Isabel Lopez. She tells us:

The Inquisition documents translated are legal dossiers, verbatim trial records from the Inquisition courtroom, written in the Spanish of the 15th and 16th centuries, a language very different from modern Castellano or Spanish. They were recorded meticulously by notaries, and each trial has a myriad of handwritings. Isabel's trial, for example, shows thirty-three changes of notaries. Besides changes in handwriting, each notary created for himself his own abbreviations and shorthand, adding an extra challenge to the transcription process.

In order to gain access to the material, first I had to learn Spanish paleography. After six months of learning this art, I set forth to the Archivo Historico Nacional in Madrid to see the originals. It took six months simply to transcribe the trial painstakingly, to transform the notarial shorthand into legible Spanish, often arguing with my dissertation director, Professor Haim Beinart, over the significance of one squiggle or another, finally agreeing on the final copy.

For purposes of my

"Some Abusers are Reading This Now"

וְעַל חֵטְא שֶׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּגָלוּי וּבַסָּתֶר׃

". . . for the sin which we have commited before Thee, openly and in secret . . . "

To all who read this, we ask:

- *Look at yourself, at your partner, at your elderly parents, at your children, as images of God. Treat each of them with the respect which that demands.*
- *Make your homes a haven. Instead of raising your hand or your voice, raise your own dignity and the self-esteem of the people who turn to you for love. You may not be able to perfect the world, but this much you can do.*
- *Help your religious community to face the fact of domestic violence and to offer active support to those who have been enduring abuse threats, and humiliation. A house of God should be a place for teaching restraint, decency, and reverence; make yours that place.*
- *Behave as though God made you worthy: it is true. Behave as though the world depends on your humanity and your decency. It does.*

"Some people who are reading this were beaten yesterday, or terrorized, or kept in isolation. Some who tormented them are reading this now. And they are not strangers to each other; they are family. Intimates. People like us. Us." On the day following Rosh Hashana, readers of *The New York Times* were surprised to see these words in a full-page advertisement sponsored by "friends of The Jewish Theological Seminary." The ad, the Seminary's annual High Holiday announcement, also appeared in the *Wall Street Journal, Newsweek* and, as part of the J.T.S. annual appeal, was sent to every Conservative congregation in North America and to major contributors to the Seminary.

The topic of the Seminary's annual High Holday message is chosen each year by a committee of faculty and administration, rabbinical students and lay leaders. In past years topics for the High Holiday message have included prayer, war and peace, and the preservation of the environment.

Although many readers were pleased with the ad, and perceived it as a step towards the recongnition of domestic violence as a concern of the entire Jewish community, others were less impressed. A comment by one cynic: "Is this just a new way to raise money off of women's bodies?" The same reader questioned whether J.T.S. has taken active steps to educate its rabbis and congregations about domestic violence and to provide support networks for battered women and children. Seminary spokespersons say that rabbis were sent, along with the message, supplementary information on domestic violence to assist them in preparing sermons and counseling victims.

— Hadar Dubowsky

A Chicago Haven for Jewish Battered Women

"We live with so many myths. Jewish families are not supposed to be dysfunctional, and Jewish husbands are supposed to be, by definition, nurturing," says Sherry Berliner Dimarsky, executive director of SHALVA, the only Chicago area Jewish organization which specializes in serving victims of domestic violence.

SHALVA [Safe Homes Advice and Legal Aid for Victims of Abuse] was conceived in 1985 when *rebbetzin* [rabbi's wife] Hanna Weinberg of Baltimore, spoke to a gathering of Orthodox women leaders in Chicago. She asked, simply, "What are you doing about Jewish domestic violence?" Though shocked at first, the women began talking honestly, educating themselves, and soon became aware of the prevalence of domestic violence within the Jewish community. Their first community meeting to discuss the subject brought out 300 Jews from all levels of observance.

SHALVA educates over 10,000 households each year and serves approximately 140 families

directly. SHALVA's work includes training sessions with rabbis, with professionals in affiliated agencies, and with therapists and social workers. SHALVA also conducts workshops in high schools, Jewish day schools, women's groups and men's clubs. Dimarsky says, "I see rabbis acting in a positive way where before they might have felt incapable of intervening. That's success." SHALVA also tries to reach out to Jewish teenagers. "I see teenage girls in very dangerous situations," she notes. "When a light bulb goes on in a girl's young head, I know there will be one less bad marriage."

Dimarsky notes that, "Jewish communities have held high standards for Jewish family life. The home has been characterized as a repository of peace, nurturing, respect and kindness. A large set of scriptural and rabbinic laws supports this ideal, providing very specific rules governing all aspects of human interactions: a Jew is prohibited from harming, shaming, speaking ill of another, or from engaging in any type of forced sexual contact. A Jewish husband is supposed to be taught to love his wife as much as he loves himself and to honor her more.

"The ideal, designed as an inspiration, was distorted over time and came to be seen as an automatic achievement, rather than a process requiring hard work. Wishful and naive thinking—the belief that Jews live up to a Jewish ideal just because they are enjoined to—creates faulty expectations that perpetuate the myth that there is no Jewish domestic violence. There are still many in the Jewish community who want to ignore the problem and cover up the truth. In fact, the most dangerous myth held is that Jewish domestic violence simply does not exist."

Domestic violence is a leading cause of injury and death among U.S. women and, like the U.S. population at large, about 20% of U.S. Jewish families experience domestic violence. "Jewish women stay in abusive relationships between seven and thirteen years, while women in general stay between three and five years. A Jewish woman will suffer a long time before she is able to give a name to her pain. Calling an organization like SHALVA is the first step."

A woman calling SHALVA for the first time will speak with a case worker who assesses her immediate needs and helps her plan for safety. The woman may not need physical shelter; however, she does need long-term support to make the transition to independence and to gain control over her life. SHALVA's therapeutic approach is to assist the woman to becoming as independent as possible. Every step of the intervention process—including therapy, referral to other agencies, legal help, and financial assistance—is geared towards her choices, towards helping the woman initiate making choices for herself.

> *"We live with so many myths. Jewish families are not supposed to be dysfunctional. Jewish husbands are supposed to be nurturing."*

"The more that women understand they are not alone, the more secure they will be in making that phone call [to SHALVA], and the more we'll be able to help," says Dimarsky, "I look forward to being obsolete."

For more information on SHALVA, call (312) 583-H.O.P.E. (4673).

— Liane Clorfene-Casten

Safety for San Francisco Women

While SHALVA was organized from within the Jewish community, Shalom Bayit, a San Francisco-based group, began as the Jewish task force of the Northern California Coalition for Battered Women and their Children. According to one of the founders, Clare Silver, the need for a Jewish group on domestic violence came out of both the denial of the issue within the Jewish community and out of the lack of sensitivity and understanding of Jewish women's needs within the battered women's movement—for example, the scheduling of meetings on Yom Kippur and the scarcity of shelters with kosher kitchens. For its first event, held on Sukkot, Shalom Bayit hosted a panel discussion on "Jewish Women's Role in 'Keeping Peace' In The Home," followed by singing in the *sukkah*. The group chose its name to "reclaim the words *Shalom Bayit* —peace in the home—not keeping the family together at all costs but returning to the original meaning: a home and family that is loving, respectful and violence-free."

For more information on Shalom Bayit, contact Claire Silver at (415) 346-6040 x 3054.

— Hadar Dubowsky

dissertation alone. I consulted 111 files of women accused of "judaizing" and tried in the Archbishopric of Toledo, Spain between the years 1492 and 1520. Since then I have

Renée Levine Melammed

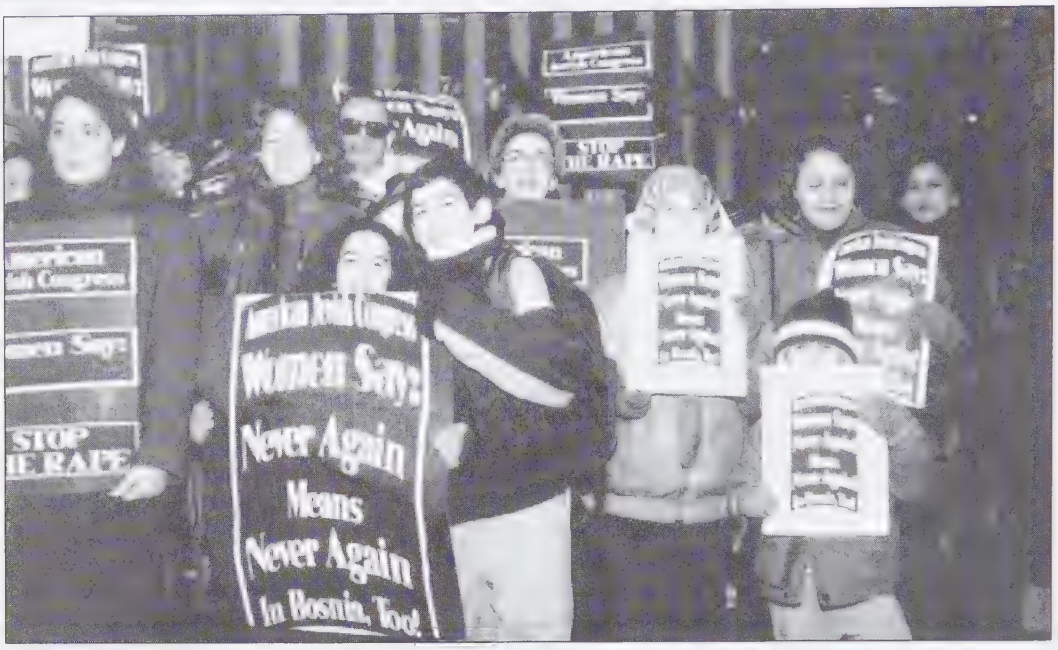
published and lectured widely on various aspects of the material: the Inquisition's pursuit of a judaizing midwife; prayers remembered and/or created by *conversos* and *conversas;* death, mourning, birth and purity rituals of the medieval community; the transmission of knowledge needed to perpetuate a secret Judaism; and the role of women in crypto-Judaism.

Women Mobilize Against Serbian Rapes

Christian, Muslim and Jewish women in Southern California have united to publicize the forced impregnation of Bosnian women and to establish a rape crisis shelter in the former Yugoslavia.

More than 14 non-profit organizatios have joined the Coalition Against Ethnic Cleansing since the Los Angeles chapters of the American Jewish Congress and the Muslim Women's League launched the group in December, 1992.

"We want to raise consciousness that rapes against women are war crimes against humanity," says Rabbi Sue Levi Elwell, director of the Congress's Jewish Feminist Center. The Serbs are intentionally impregnating women as one step of their so-called ethnic cleansing.



A coalition of Jewish women's groups in New York protesting outside the Yugoslavian mission, organized by the Commission for Women's Equality of the American Jewish Congress.

The coalition is collecting donations to send psychological counselors to the shelter it aims to open in early March, 1993.

"We've been urging the six women U.S. senators to take a position and lead a fight to get relief to these women," says A.J.C.program associate Rebecca Meyer. "We'd like to see President Clinton take the steps to document these crimes, bring the perpetrators to justice and provide effective treatment for the rape survivors."

The coalition is comprised of such diverse groups as Hillel Student Organizations and the Religious Sisters of Charity of the L.A. Catholic Archdiocese. Congress staff member Meyer advises: create more coalitions, call and write state representatives in addition to the women senators and donate to the Bosnian Rape Relief fund.

Working as a coalition brings added benefits, Elwell says. "Jewish and Muslim women don't get to work together very often. This has been a wonderful opportunity."

Nahid Ansari, board member of the Muslim Women's League, agrees. "All of us see this issue the same way," she says. "It's been a very productive joint effort so far."

More information is available by calling the American Jewish Congress at (213) 651-4601 or the Muslim Public Affairs Council at (213) 383-3443. Tax deductible donations may be sent to Bosnian Rape Relief, c/o American Jewish Congress, 6505 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 417, Los Angeles, CA 90048. The six women senators can be reached at the foloowing numbers: Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), (202) 224-3841; Carol Mosley Brown (D-Illinois), (202) 224-2854; Nancy Landon Kasselbaum, (R-Kansas), (202) 224-4654; Barbara Mikulski (D-Maryland), (202) 224-4654; and Patty Murray (D-Wash.), (202) 224-2621.

—Lisa Alcalay Klug

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Sandi Knell Tamny celebrates the spirit and resolve of the Sephardic Jews from Spain with her sculptures entitled "The Chosen," recently on exhibit in Canton, Ohio.

Nobody Knows My Name

Israel's new Consul General in New York received cheers when she introduced herself to the Jews and African-Americans gathered in the consulate apartment to hear a gospel group sing

Colette Avital

spirituals and an Israeli actor read "I Had a Dream" in Hebrew at the consulate's annual celebration of the birth of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. She opened her remarks by announcing "I am Ambassador Colette Avital. I am not the wife of the Consul General. I *am* the Consul General.

When asked after the ceremonies what had spurred her remark, Avital said, "I just realized that as people were walking in the door and I greeted them saying 'Good evening, I am Colette Avital, your hostess', they just nodded and walked on, looking around for where the Ambassador was. I had to say *something*."

—Susan Weidman Schneider

Media Alert: Betrayed by TV

Can Jewish men and women be sexy? Not together, says this season of network series television.

The explicitly Jewish male characters this season range from nervous nerds ("Murphy Brown" on CBS), and cute *nebbishes* ("Northern Exposure" on CBS, "Flying Blind" on Fox), to feisty writers ("Love and War" on CBS), committed union organizers ("Homefront" on ABC), and hunks ("Sisters" on NBC). But whether in sitcoms, dramas, or dramadies, most of these men lust for a non-Jewish woman, usually the blond WASP of their dreams.

Jewish women hardly exist on television in any case. When there *are* regular Jewish female characters, they're the practical ones with boring sex lives—a tough District Attorney on NBC's "Reasonable Doubts," a nurse's aide on Fox's "The Heights" (the one *not* in the rock 'n' roll band). On Fox's "Beverly Hills 90210" the Jewish girl is the smart one wearing glasses (surprise!). The message, disturbing because it is particularly apparent on the "youthquake" programs: Jewish women are not romantic material.

Television writers seem to view young Jewish women as precursors to Jewish mothers—and therefore as slated for the butt of jokes, retirement in Florida (all of the shows!) or enthronement on a pedestal (CBS's "Brooklyn Bridge"). Some Jewish female characters are even men in drag ("Coffee Talk" on NBC's "Saturday Night Live"). Both male and female Israeli characters, however (on "Love and War" and "Reasonable Doubts"), are clearly exotic, foreign and very sexy.

Fox has also introduced "Jessica Cohen" in its new "Class of '96," specifically identified as coming from a wealthy family in Shaker Heights. *TV Guide* and *New York* magazine, assuming she was modeled on the daughter of producer Leonard Goldberg, immediately labeled her a "Jewish American Princess" before the show even premiered! Yet Jessica shuns fancy appearance, actually uses the library for studying, and dates the gorgeous (non-Jewish) lead. Can a young Jewish woman finally be romantic material? Stay tuned.

—Nora Mandel

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SET AGAINST DARKNESS
poems by Grace Herman

First Born
When you were ten months
you lay in
the curve of my lap
our warmth mingling
love for you
flowing to you

When you were ten weeks
I
squeezed your arms
banged you
twice
hard
against a wall

At less than two weeks
you slid
down your tucked tilted crib
Running
I found you red-faced
wedged
squirming

What does the body remember?
Is there anything the body forgets?

LADIES OF GENESIS
poems by Barbara D. Holender

QUEEN ESTHER

Sushan. The Castle.

Dear Cousin Mordecai,

What do you mean, save my people?
They're your people too.
I could get killed defying the king—
remember?
Destroy this note.
Pray for me. If you hear no more
I will be dead.
Esther

Dear Mordecai,

I have been to see Ahasuerus.
As you see, I am not dead.
he asked what I wished and I said
I wished him to come to dinner.
With Haman
may he choke on the food, that
murderer.
Don't worry. I have my reasons.
Esther

Mordecai,

Very brave you are, sitting outside
the gates
egging me on. Don't rush me.
You don't know my husband—
he'll say yes to anything
as long as he thinks it's his own idea.
He keeps asking what I want,
I keep inviting him to dinner,
Haman keeps kissing my hand.
I can't believe they have no idea
who they're dealing with.

Tell everyone to pray for me. You too.

Esther

Dear Mordecai,

I was terrified,
but I just sat there smiling
and waited till the king was so drunk
he wouldn't have known you from
Haman.
Then I said, Look, honey,
I know it sounds crazy, but your
friend here
is planning to kill me and all my
relatives
and you've got to stop him.

It was wonderful.
Haman threw himself on my couch
begging for mercy, and Ahasuerus
thought he was attacking me.

No doubt you saw Haman hanging.
Come to dinner tonight.
Ahasuerus says I don't look Jewish.

Love,
Esther

Forthcoming!

IN ANOTHER CITY
by Layle Silbert

Still Available!

SARAH'S DAUGHTERS SING
edited by Henny Wenkart

JEWISH WOMEN'S
RESOURCE CENTER
9 East 69th Street
New York, NY 10021
(212) 535-5900 x 10

LEARN

Gender and Judaism, a conference to be held April 25-27, will explore gender related issues in Jewish thought, history, literature, ritual and culture. Speakers include: Howard Adelman, Harry Brod, Yael Feldman, Sylvia Barack Fishman, Laura Geller, Judith Hauptman, Susannah Heschel, Paula Hyman, Judith Plaskow and Alice Shalvi. Information: *Tamar Rudavsky/Judith Stauber, Melton Center for Jewish Studies, Ohio State University, 344 Dulles Hall, 230 W. 17th Avenue, Columbus, OH 43210-1311, (614) 292-0967.*

Women's Media; National Women's Organizations; and Work in Progress are three new directories from the National Council for Research on Women, a coalition of 75 centers and organizations that bridges scholarship, policy and action programs. They also publish *Women's Research Network News,* a quarterly newsletter. *NCRW, 47-49 East 65th Street, New York, NY 10021, (212) 570-5001.*

Conversations with interesting women — famous, not-so-famous, women with special interests or special problems, form a collection of 300 videotapes from the cable TV show "Focus on Women," created by Florence Rapoport. Long Island Cablevision has donated the tapes, whose subjects include Gloria Steinem, Elizabeth Holtzman, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, Susan Weidman Schneider and a group of Israeli teenagers, to the *Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe College, Cambridge, MA 02139.*

Hebrew Women Writers 1992-1993 is a booklet providing brief biographies of Amalia Kahana-Carmon, Yehudit Hendel, Shulamit Lapid, Ruth Almog, Hannah Bat-Shahar, Gabriella Avigur-Rotem, Savyon Liebrecht, Michal Gourin, Noga Treves, Leah Ayalon, Orly Castel-Bloom and Leah Aini. Further information about these writers, translations, biographies and biliographies are also available. *The Institute for the Translation of Hebrew Literature, P.O.B. 10051, Ramat Gan 52001, Israel, (03) 5796830, Fax (03) 5796832.*

Sexual Politics in the Third Reich: The Persecution of Homosexuals During the Holocaust, a bibliography and introductory essay by Jack Nusan Porter, is $5.95 from *The Spencer Press, 8 Burnside Road, Newton, MA 02161.*

SUPPORT SERVICES

Independent Adoption: Exploring the Options is a free workshop for couples and singles. Topics include: domestic versus international adoption; adoption of infants & young children; working with attorneys, agencies & birth parents; home studies, pre-certification & immigration requirements; and costs of adopting. Workshops are led monthly by *Kathy Ann Brodsky, Director of Networking Adoption Program. JCCA of New York, 575 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10022, (212) 303-4722.*

AJIRA, an outreach program for Jews in recovery meets twice each month at the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco. They're seeking funds to hire a part-time staffer, produce a newsletter, and advertise in local publications. Newsletter $18.00; supporting member $36.00; founding member $54.00; AJIRA angel $100. *JCC of SF, 3200 California Street, (415) 346-6040 x3054.*

The Caregivers Center offers workshops led by prominent eldercare experts, exploring survival tactics, avoiding the pitfalls of caregiving, finding help, making informed choices, ethics and the Jewish perspective, nutrition and health maintenance, memory loss and more. $10 per session; $25 for three sessions. *Dorot, Inc., 171 West 85th Street, New York, NY 10024, (212) 769-2850.*

CONNECT

Female ritual directors of synagogues, who are not ordained rabbis, are invited to network with a non-ordained woman who is *baalat kreeyah* (Torah reader), on weekdays, Shabbat and holidays, conducts the daily minyan, and prepares students for bar and bat mitzvah. *Sandra Winters, Beth El Congregation, 8101 Park Heights Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21208, (410) 484-0411.*

Dovetail: a Newsletter by and for Jewish-Christian Families aims to provide a channel of communication for interfaith couples, their parents and children. Articles and letters to the editor are welcome. One year subscriptions for six bi-monthly issues are $24.99 from *Dovetail Publishing 3014A Folsom Street, Boulder, CO 80304.*

The 13th International Conference of Gay and Lesbian Jews will take place in London, England from April 30-May 3, 1993. For information, application: *Bat Mitzvah Conference, London WC1N 3XX, England.*

Access invites unaffiliated college students to visit local synagogues, get rabbinical counseling, and learn in

HOW TO INCLUDE

Photograph · Randy Duchaine from That All May Worship

That All May Worship: An Interfaith Welcome To People With Disabilities "prayerfully pushes" religious leaders and their congregations to change how people with disabilities are, or are not, included in religious life. The 52-page compendium shows how to overcome barriers of attitude, communication, and architecture. $10.00 per copy to individuals or congregations; bulk rates available. *National Organization on Disability, Religion and Disability Program, 910 16th Street, NW #600, Washington, DC 20006, (800) 248-ABLE-2253, (202) 293-5968 TDD.* Available on tape for those with visual impairments.

The Journal of Religion in Disability & Rehabilitation is a new quarterly, aiming to be an interdisciplinary, interfaith and multicultural forum. Send your request for a free sample of the charter issue (Spring 1993) on official letterhead to *The Haworth Press, Inc., Sample Department, Box Comp, 10 Alice Street, Binghamton, NY 13904-1580.* Subscriptions are $18.00 per year for individuals, $32.00 for institutions. $48 for libraries. "Instructions for Authors" are available from editors *William Blair or Dana Y. Davidson, Journal of Religion in Disability, Baptist Medical Center, Pastoral Counseling & Education Center, 750 Montclair Road, Birmingham, AL 35213.*

synagogue-sponsored adult education courses. A free directory that lists participating synagogues in the US and Canada, as well as Israel programs, summer job opportunities for students, and local families willing to offer a Sabbath meal, or a friendly call. *Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 838 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10021.*

The Albert Finkelstein Campus Editors Mission to Poland and Israel, summer of 1993, seeks editors-in-chief, managing editors or news editors from college newspapers interested in a deeper understanding of Israel's social, political and security challenges and of the importance of Israel to the Jewish people. Applications due by the end of April to *Jeff Ross, ADL of B'nai B'rith, 823 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, (212) 490-2525.*

PRESS OF POLITICS

The Getting It Gazette: Women's Point of View Journalism is a political broadsheet, featuring Jane O'Reilly and Deidre English, among others, and is intended for women"who can laugh and think at the same time." $35 for intermittent issues of the 1993 Gazette. *Getting It Gazette, 451 West 24th Street, New York, NY 10011, (212) 229-0763.*

Political Woman: Charting Our Progress Towards Equality is an independent, non-partisan, progressive, pro-choice, monthly newsletter that aims to be "the definitive source of timely and in-depth information on women in government." Charter subscriptions $35.00. *Political Woman, 276 Chatterton Parkway, White Plains, NY 10606, Fax: (914) 285-9763.*

Choosing Choice: Plain talk every other month about abortion, politics and the Constitution is a newsletter designed to illuminate abortion law for non-lawyers. Complimentary copies available. A one-year subscription includes twelve letters (ready to be signed and mailed to legislators). Regular subscriptions $55; women's clinics $45; students $34. *Choosing Choice, 868 Shrader Street, San Francisco, CA 94117.*

"YOUR STORY HERE"

For an exhibition "Becoming American Women : Clothing and the Jewish Immigrant Experience, 1880-1920," if you have any artifacts (clothing, photos, documents, etc.) that

Courtesy Chicago Historical Society

Tillie Novick, husband and son, in front of their coppersmith shop on West 12th Street, Chicago, c. 1912.

you can lend or donate, or if you have any stories you can tell please contact the *Chicago Historical Society, Attention Joanne Grossman, 1601 N. Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60614, (312) 642-5035 x 270.*

Share your celebration of the New Moon. Submit your meditations for the Hebrew months; creative writing and illustration, ideas for text study, annotated list of resources, groups and materials for a Rosh Chodesh Sourcebook. Please send three copies and SASE with materials or inquiries by June 1, 1993, to *Susan Berrin, 903 Linden Avenue, Victoria BC V8V 4G8 Canada.*

The unique spiritual journeys and personal stories of Jews by choice are sought for a book. Write or call for mail questionnaire or appointment for telephone interview. *Janna Walsh, 331 Mountain View Avenue, Skillman, NJ 08558, (609) 966-2599.*

For a book on the history of childlessness, please send your story. Whether because of medical or economic reasons, medical treatment or infertility, how did it feel? What did you do about it? How did others respond? Your story can be sent on a tape; it will be trancribed and a copy of the transcription and tape sent back. *Elaine Tyler May, American Studies Program, 104 Scott Hall, 72 Pleasant Street, S.E., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455-0225. (612) 624-4190.*

JUDAIC ARTS

National Jewish Art Week, March 14-20, 1993, will be a first annual celebration aimed at expanding the public's awareness of the diversity and quality of American Jewish art and culture. To be included in a calendar of events, or for information, contact *The American Guild of Judaic Art: Attn: National Jewish Art Week, P.O. Box 1794, Murray Hill Station, New York, NY 10156-0609, (212) 889-7581.*

Relevaciones is a flamenco dance/drama depicting the trauma experienced by a Catholic woman in 16th century Spain when she discovered her family was secretly practicing Judaism. The program features flamenco dancer Lili del

Lili del Castillo

Castillo, and a lecture demonstration on the historical background of flamenco as it relates to Sephardic music. For booking information, call *Southwest News and Arts Service at (505) 984-3091.*

The Pomegranate Guild of Judaic Needlework invites women and men at every level of ability in the needle arts to participate in this association which disseminates information on Judaic embroidery, provides a bulletin of information, and trains teachers. Chapters exist in the US and Canada. *The Pomegranate Guild of Judaic Needlework, P.O. Box 260964, Encino, CA 91425-0964.*

— compiled by Naomi Danis

REACH OUT TO RUSSIAN WOMEN

An International Conference of Jewish Women in Kiev, Ukraine, May 23-29, 1994 is being planned by Project Kesher, an independent non-profit organization that assists Jewish renewal programs in the former Soviet Union and connects them to appropriate Western Jewish resources for support. The conference will provide a meeting place to learn and experience religious pluralism, activism and history. Want to help plan it? Lead a workshop? Organize a delegation? Contact: *Sallie E. Gratch, Project Kesher, 1134 Judson Avenue, Evanston, IL 60202, (703) 332-1994, Fax: (708) 332-2134.*

Books and articles on Jewish women's issues are needed for a Russian-Jewish library at the Klein Branch of the JCC in Northeast Philadelphia, a neighborhood with many Russian immigrants. Also ideas are sought to organize financial support for publication of a pluralistic Jewish women's anthology, even initially as a pamphlet with key articles or selections. Also seeking an editor for such a project. Contact: *Rabbi Robert Tabak, 1616 Walnut Streeet, #909, Philadelphia, PA 19103, (215) 985-1818.*

For cooperative projects with Russian feminist scholars and activists, send proposals for activities involving training/teaching, project development and research. Proposals should offer tested and practical models appropriate for translation into the Russian experience. Contact *Sarah Harder, Women's Studies Consortium at the University of Wisconsin, UW-Eau-Claire, Eau Claire, WI 54701, (715) 836-5717.*

(continued from page 29)

Here are some suggestions for what organizations and individuals can do to maximize women's roles in traditional Jewish philanthropies:

10 steps into the future of Jewish women's philanthropy

1. Gender, money and power—think again about how they're linked. Brian Lurie, UJA Executive Vice President, says, "Women donors will get more power in the UJA when there are more women professionals in place—for example, as executive directors of major Jewish federations." He understands that philanthropy has to be paralleled by leadership positions for women, although he may be putting the cart before the horse.

When Lurie vacated his position as director of the San Francisco Jewish Federation to take over as the head of national UJA, he was replaced by another man; no women were seriously considered for the job. If male Jewish community leaders are serious about bringing in more of women's money they will have to relinquish some of the power they have arrogated to themselves.

Women are ready and able to give to traditional Jewish causes but willing to do so only when they see signs of expanding opportunities for women's participation in leadership.

2. Focus on the future, even the distant future. Women live 7 years longer than men, on average, so older women control a great deal of inherited wealth. In the wider community there's a whole new cottage industry in courses for older women on managing this money, and Jewish federations are beginning to hold financial planning seminars for women of all ages, as they've been doing all along for men. (We're waiting for them to offer parenting seminars to the men!).

Recognize the anxiety many older women feel when the family's chief breadwinner dies, even if many may be able to give more than their husbands did because they're the beneficiaries of large life-insurance policies. They are "absolutely petrified," says a Los Angeles woman, "that they might be ridiculed for doing something stupid. They haven't been trained; they haven't been allowed to make mistakes. As they've made their $100 donations, they haven't been noticed. They haven't been cultivated."

Hardly any women set up trusts and sophisticated financial planning mechanisms to have their philanthropy outlive them, according to attorney Claire Cutler. All women should keep in mind the meaning of the word WILL—you can do exactly as you wish with your money after you die; some women, trammelled by their husbands wishes on matters of charitable donations during their own lifetime have chosen to express themselves posthumously!

> *"You say the Women's Division raises 20% of the UJA budget. Would you say women have 20% of the power?"*
>
> *—Judy Chapman*

Divorce provides another—albeit surprising—opportunity for women's philanthropy. "When I was divorced," writes Judith Stern Peck in a 1989 LILITH article, "I actually included maintenance of charitable contributions as part of my divorce negotiations, precisely to avoid having divorce end my ability to maintain leadership status in the community." Jewish agencies have sought ways to help those women (the majority, sadly) who are in dire straits financially after divorce. But a subset of Jewish women receive divorce settlements that enable them to make substantial charitable contributions. One Jewish woman who raises money for several Jewish philanthropies suggests: "maybe at the other end of the spectrum we need courses for wealthy women on how to handle money after divorce."

3. Showcase women's issues; respond to women's needs. A feminist philanthropy is emerging in Jewish life. "I'll give only to causes that support both Jews and women," announces Francine Haber of Denver.

For example, a woman who is interested in women's health issues, hearing that in Israel a woman may have to wait a year before she can get a mammogram at the universal-health-care clinic, may be just the person to underwrite new mobile screening vans for the Hadassah medical center in Jerusalem.

When LILITH editors lecture around the country, Jewish women who haven't yet affiliated with a synagogue or made a contribution to a Jewish cause come out to be counted as Jews—because they respond to programs on women's issues. These women may in fact be easier to reach than unaffiliated men; they just want a combination of Jewish and feminist activities to draw them in. If Jewish women don't feel heard and valued, they may channel their philanthropy independently, as many are now doing (we'll meet some of them in Part 2 of this LILITH series).Several women interviewed were moved to a new activism when they learned that only 5% of foundation grants in the US go to projects that support girls and women.

Women donors and consumers of services are one. Jewish women with young children are consumers of social services (even if they also give the money to create the services). Their Jewish loyalities are determined more by their own specific needs and the perceived needs of others—for example, the elderly—than by an abstract sense of what "the Jewish people" needs, so it makes perfect sense to address the personal needs of the women a fundraiser approaches. Barbara Zonen of Santa Barbara says that her community now gives only 40% of the money they raise for UJA/Federation to Israel; it used to give 100%. "People want to give," she says, "to what they can see and experience."

4. Watch the timeline. Programs with feminist content are especially important as a magnet for younger Jewish women, who stay distant from Jewish community institutions throughout their young adulthood. Demographer Gary Tobin of Brandeis says that younger Jews are likely not to be "found" by traditional methods; typically they don't affiliate until they have kids, and Jews marry later and have children later (a full decade later) than their parents did.

Obviously there's less time in the lifecycle to use the services of community institutions, become involved with them, learn their needs and then support them. An example: Susan Schlechter, 47, got involved as a volunteer at Manhattan's 92nd Street YM/YWHA because her kids were in nursery school there, 20 years ago. She is now on their board. A woman having her first child at 38 will be looking at nursery school in her early forties. Even if she did want to get involved as a volunteer and later as a donor, she'd be entering the system at least fifteen years later than Schlechter did.

Jewish institutions should try to attract young women via Hillels, programs at women's centers, even Jewish sororities. Get them at an exit route from college—the same way American Express hooks them then to

keep them interested and loyal throughout their lives. For young Jewish women, the key will be to showcase projects that are Jewish, yes, but which also have a women's component—for example, American Jewish Congress Commission on Women's Equality has just created a tag line which appears on all its announcements and letterheads, and which will be readily understandable to post-college-age Jewish women: "Proudly Jewish, visibly feminist."

How can we help young women have a vision of how to use their resources effectively? Because writing a check is less visible than direct service volunteering, women need to talk to their children about the process of making charitable gifts. Doreen Hermelin of Detroit says that she and her husband like to wait to make disbursements from their family foundation until their grown children are all in town together, so that they can discuss which causes to support, and so that the younger generation can advocate for charities they'd like to see the family support.

A concern for how women are taught to give is not exclusive to those with grown children. Archie Gottesman of New Jersey, 29, says that she was repelled at the tactics used to raise money at a major reproductive rights march in Washington, where one women's organization had volunteers walking around with large plastic bags to collect donations."What's the message here?" asks Gottesman. "That it's OK to throw your loose change into a garbage bag? And that this is the way to support a cause you think is important enough to travel to Washington for? Women should be taught to sit down and write a check."

5. Synagogues: draw in single women! Future philanthropy may depend on this community of women. Jewish women are apt to be ignored by traditional Jewish community fundraising efforts, yet these are precisely the women who, if causes appeal to them, could play a major role in Jewish philanthropies. Their single status often causes them to be ignored by synagogues and community-based charities, but we know from the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey that these women constitute a significant percentage of all Jews. Major fundraising appeals in the Jewish community, in fact—Israel bonds, UJA, Jewish seminaries, do much of their solicitation either in synagogue or through synagogue membership lists.

Rela Geffen Monson has shown that Jewish career women who belong to a synagogue are significantly more likely to give to their local Jewish federations than those not affiliated with a synagogue. Women who aren't attracted to synagogue membership—either because they're never-married (and ignored), or divorced (and hence may feel unwelcome), or widowed (and hence closed out of a Noah's Ark process of participation) are not only missing out on part of an affiliative social process, but also aren't available to the Jewish community for fundraising purposes.

6. Pay attention to diversity. A rabbi who for 50 years has been pitching Jewish causes says he was asked to give a speech on behalf of UJA recently. "What do you want me to speak about?" he asked. The reply: "It doesn't matter. Just make them cry."

The point is that these days they're not all going to cry for the same reasons! Jewish women are less likely than ever to see Israel as their shared and "primary reason for giving," according to Jacqueline Levine, veteran Jewish activist and past president of the National Jewish Community Relations Council, and because women are themselves a diverse bunch, Jewish causes have to showcase a whole range of programs.

7. Teach what you know, and learn from the experiences of other women. so that you don't have to reinvent the wheel.Reach out to general women's organizations and feminist groups to share expertise and experiences. Jewish women have had the benefit of belonging to a community which has always felt it had to "look after its own," so Jewish fundraising has been honed to a fine art. Jewish women may not like the male model of asking for money, but the asking itself is not usually terrifying. By contrast, for women of other ethnic or religious groups asking for the money that's needed—even for the worthiest cause—can be a daunting task. Betsy Brill of the Chicago Foundation for Women says, "Most women can do all the hands-on work, but are failures when it comes to 'the ask'." Forming a consortium with women engaged in philanthropy for secular causes gives Jewish women an opportunity to appreciate how good their fundraising has been in many respects.

8. Pump up the amounts women give. The Jewish community is getting better at this. When Lion of Judah was first proposed 20 years ago, by a UJA group in Miami, the idea of women giving $5000 contributions in their own names each year was greeted with skepticism, says UJA national Women's Division director Cindy Schwartz. "Now they're up to a $50,000 category," she is quick to add. Barbara Zonen in Santa Barbara says, "I wear the pomegranate pin, (a new honor for women who give approximately $1800 a year, created to be attractive to business and professional women). I see myself as a role model, showing women like me—in their late 30's—that this isn't an impossible amount to give." Jewish women are not afraid to ask for money, but we often ask for too little, partly because we haven't had many role models of women giving big gifts. Set your sights high. Women are so used to "making do" and cutting corners that we sometimes forget what the real costs of a project are.

9. Notice small changes. Don't fall prey to size-ism.Women are creating new kinds of charity—small-scale and grassroots—even within larger philanthropic enterprises. At federation events, meetings of Jewish women's organizations such as Na'amat, National Council of Jewish Women, Hadassah, ORT, testimonial dinners of all kinds, women have started a trend toward modesty and connectedness even in the small details of the arrangements. Bat Mitzvah celebrants have begun to ask that charitable contributions be made in lieu of gifts. One young woman asked that her guests bring food and toiletries for a battered women's shelter; another asked guests to contribute to women's causes in Israel. A synagogue sisterhood used new books for the library in lieu of centerpieces at its luncheon. Women are suggesting charity instead of birthday or wedding gifts, and making a contribution to a children's charity for their children's birthdays.

10. When you're asked for your dollars, ask questions. Lots of them. Here are some samples: Are there women on your board? How many women does your organization employ on an executive level? Do you encourage part-time or flextime work for your own employees at the same time that you advocate for provisions like these at the federal level? What are the services you provide for girls and women? Will you recognize and publicize donations your receive from women the same way you will with contributions from men? Will you be sure to thank me (and list me, and mail to me) in my own name? Try coercive philanthropy, too. For example, "I'll be happy to make a contribution when you have 5 more women on your board."

Your charitable contribution is a chance to leverage change. Know—as men have always known—that you get a vote with your charity buck, and that directing those bucks wisely toward projects you believe in can be refreshingly empowering.

Listening to Myself on My Daughter's Message Machine

This is your mother—at two in the morning from London
I'm calling—just back from Rome—Thought I'd quick
try to catch you—Maybe a little later—again I'll try—
'til seven they still charge less to talk—But
I don't want you should depend on me staying up. . .

It does me strange justice, this voice my daughter saved,
taping it off her message machine
so she can store it away for her children.

Was it the rain those months in London that made me speak
like that—washing off outer layers so you heard
the Yiddish flavors of my Lower East Side grandparents?

And the rain that Roman Easter as I stood outside
St. Peter's—bells tolling in the downpour
the resurrection of the spirit—
of grandmothers Kate and Leah who kept urging
the next day on my return to London—

I should go—pick up a phone—and give a call
to the children scattered in Denver, Philadelphia,
Boston. And early morning when I connected,

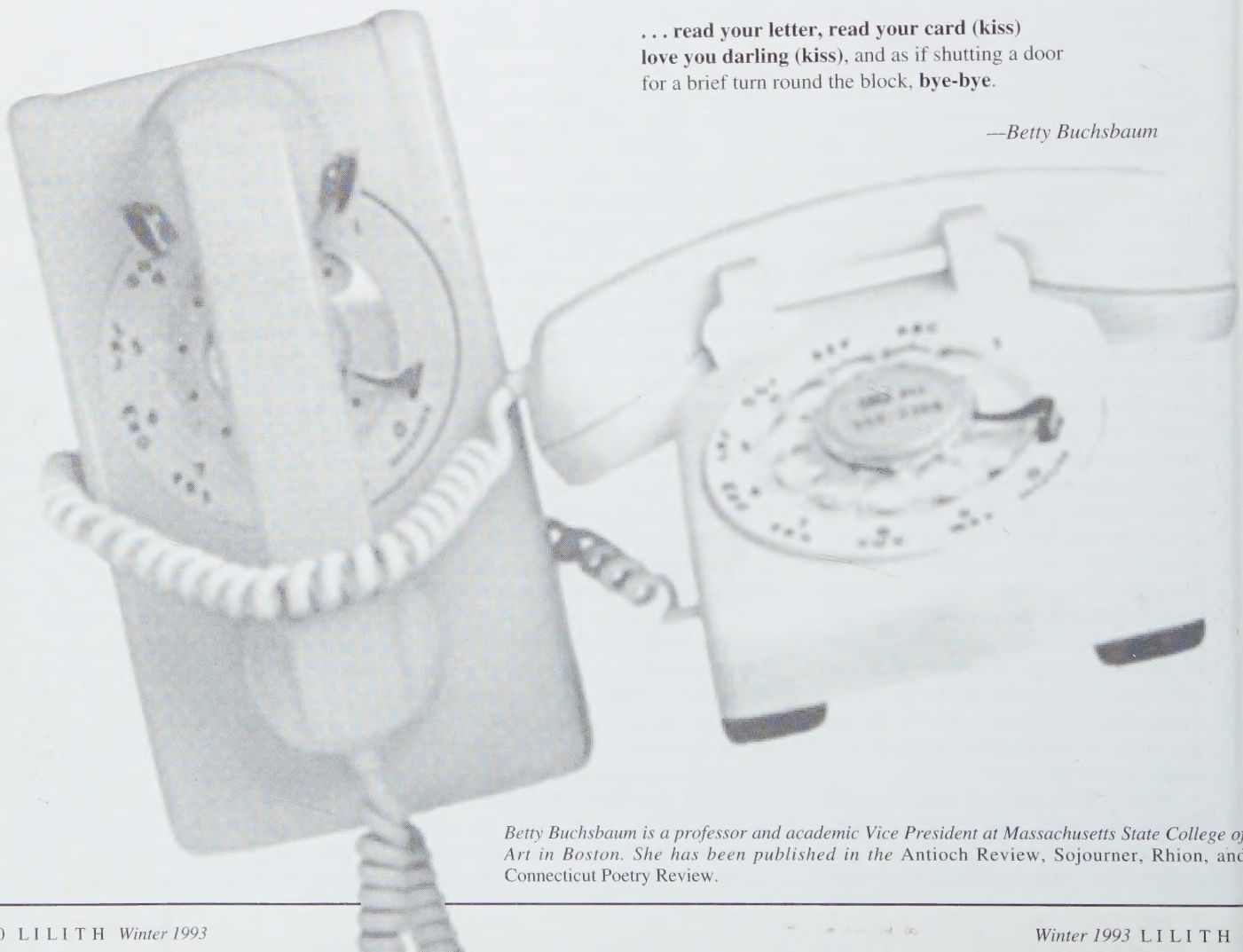
not with a daughter but with her message machine
(one beep at my back and another about to silence me),
did the grandmothers purse their lips and whisper

about this latest tyranny, did they roll up
their sleeves and show me how to work against time
with dignity: starting slow, like an update

on weather, reporting my foreign movements at some
crazy hour; yet at the canny moment,
tying loose ends up with a flourish:

. . . read your letter, read your card (kiss)
love you darling (kiss), and as if shutting a door
for a brief turn round the block, **bye-bye**.

—Betty Buchsbaum



Betty Buchsbaum is a professor and academic Vice President at Massachusetts State College of Art in Boston. She has been published in the Antioch Review, Sojourner, Rhion, and Connecticut Poetry Review.